Grassroots Development

Journal of the Inter-American Foundation

Challenging Assumptions, Changing Metaphors

VOLUME 25

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2004

Contents

The Inter-American Foundation (IAF), an independent agency of the United States government, was created in 1969 as an experimental foreign assistance program. The IAF works to promote equitable, responsive and participatory self-help development by awarding grants directly to organizations in Latin America and the Caribbean. It also enters into partnerships with public and private sector entities to mobilize local, national and international resources for grassroots development. The IAF's operating budget consists of congressional appropriations and funds derived through the Social Progress Trust Fund.

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The purpose of this journal is to share grassroots development experiences with a variety of readers. The editor encourages submissions on relevant topics including, but not limited to, the following:

- how the poor in Latin America and the Caribbean organize and work to improve their lives;
- issues and trends in the development community;
- how institutions cooperate to further the development of the region.

Please direct query letters to Paula Durbin at the above address or e-mail **pdurbin@iaf.gov.**

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Lais, on the cover, along with her mother, Rute Ribeiro de Souza, and Maria Conceição N. Brito, center and right on the opposite page, represented a recycling cooperative from Formosa, Goias, Brazil, at the Second Festival of Trash and Citizenship hosted in Belo Horizonte by IAF grantee ASMARE. For the opening march, Lais and Brito wore dresses crocheted with tabs from aluminum cans, two of many creations fashioned from recyclables on display during the Festival. The material in the background awaits transformation in ASMARE's workshops. For more on the event, see pages 47-50.

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Recyclables in fashion.

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A Letter to the Readers

For many years Patrick Breslin, IAF's vice president for external affairs, and David Bray, formerly an IAF representative, have been engaged in a conversation, at times intense, on how scientific paradigms affect the way we order the world around us. This animated discussion of some heady concepts — classical linear thinking, complexity and chaos — began at the IAF and continued via e-mail when Bray left to assume the chairmanship of the department of environmental studies at Florida International University. Eventually, the exchange led Breslin to organize the points he was making into "Thinking outside Newton's Box: Metaphors for Grassroots Development," our lead article and a perspective that challenges us to consider where our assumptions come from and how valid they are.

Breslin insists that the Inter-American Foundation, as an institution intent on trying new things, necessarily veers away from linear analysis and its deceptive implications of predictability. As we put this issue of *Grassroots Development* together, it struck us that a thread picked up often in this journal has to do with defying the facile expectations that sometimes flow from linear thinking. To begin with, our cover probably doesn't conform to conventional notions about our projects and their beneficiaries. Neither does "Developmental Abilities," Eduardo Rodríguez-Frías' debut feature (page 19) on grantee organizations run by and for disabled individuals, a class certainly burdened by commonly held assumptions. The beneficiares of these IAF grantees proved able to overcome both their individual circumstances and the even harsher reality of prejudice and established practices. Given a chance, they maximized the capabilities available and the opportunities that unfolded, and they succeeded. In the end, the people involved showed they were entrepreneurs, technicians and workers playing their advantages against their disadvantages, like strivers everywhere.

Sandra Nichols' contribution to *Grassroots Development*'s remittance forum (page 27) especially brings to mind Breslin's call for new metaphors. It's hard to imagine anything that has excited development professionals more than their discovery of the sheer volume of hard cash sent home by migrant workers. Presumptions persist about the possibilities for putting this resource to "productive" use, despite cautions that we know very little about all the elements that make up the remittance complex. Nichols' article is our first look at nonmonetary remittances, here advances in agricultural technology that flow across the U.S.-Mexico border without any official assistance. The expectations that sustain the movement seem anchored in logic and experience, but enter complexity and the inevitable, unanticipated effects of multiple variables, including the weather, ensue. Nonetheless the phenomenon is thriving. Is the appropriate metaphor the "self-organizing flock of birds" of Breslin's article? Is the development community prepared to frame the issue in those terms when considering whether it has a role to play in these kinds of transfers?

In self-help development, complexity cannot be avoided. David Valenzuela, IAF's president, confirms this very point in his interview (page 39) with a reference to a grant he approved only reluctantly. The beneficiaries were farmers who wanted computers when the experts thought they should want tractors. Their community had no reliable source of electric power and no telephone service, but, to everyone's surprise, the farmers had hit upon the right idea. Young lives changed dramatically, most obviously because of their parents' foresight, but also due to a combination of factors even the farmers had not imagined — and because someone at the IAF trusted intuition instead of heeding logic.

The application of the points made in our cover story to the rest of this issue's contents doesn't stop with these examples. IAF's place in the development assistance panorama has been as a donor unafraid to take risks in selecting from among the hundreds of ideas received every year in response to our call for proposals. Linear thought has had its place in the evaluation process, but we would like to believe we aren't locked into that framework. Our portfolio is, after all, full of success stories that nobody would have predicted.

Paula Durbin
Editor
Grassroots Development

Thinking Outside Newton's Box: Metaphors for Grassroots Development

By Patrick Breslin

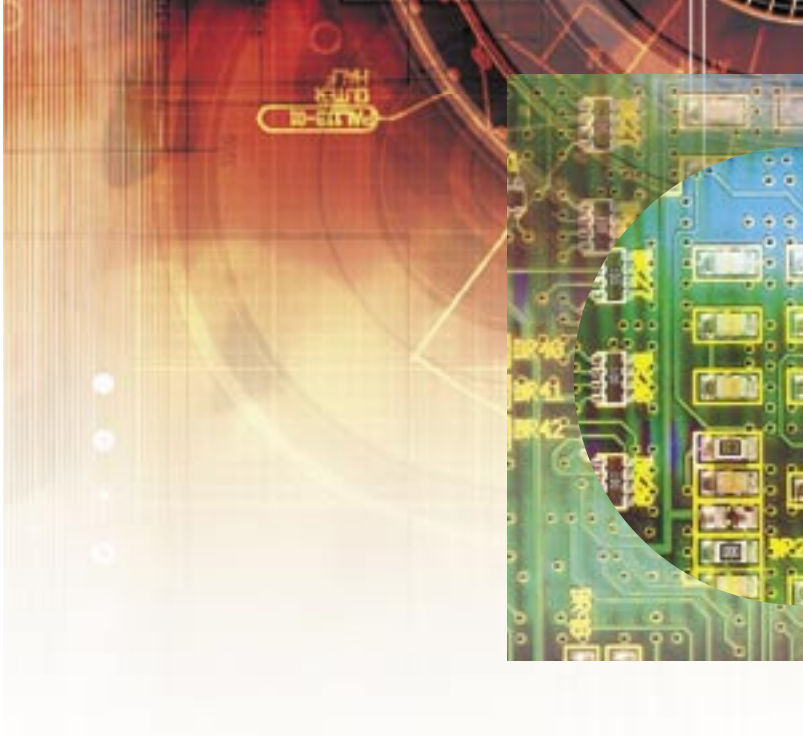
That which is overdesigned, too highly specific, anticipates outcome; the anticipation of outcome guarantees, if not failure, the absence of grace.

— William Gibson, *All Tomorrow's Parties*

Newton's genius

Into a world of mystery and confusion, Isaac Newton in 1686 introduced a mathematical order that not only explained the movements of the heavens but gave humankind a framework, and a set of assumptions for thinking about almost everything else. Before Newton, people approached the universe with magic and religion and gazed in wonder at the impenetrable dance of the planets. Astronomers from the Egyptians on mapped the sky's gyrations and scrambled to accommodate them in their inadequate theories. Then Newton devised the gravitational theory, the laws of motion and the differential calculus to track them, and suddenly the orbits of the planets arranged themselves in predictable paths.

Based on Newton's work, Edmond Halley soon was able to correctly foretell the reappearance of the comet now named for him. A century later, scientists derived from Newton's laws alone the existence of the undiscovered planet Neptune and pinpointed (with a bit of mathematical luck) its location in the firmament. So stupendous was Newton's achievement that it provided succeeding generations a mechanistic metaphor for the universe as well as an exalted



expectation of what science should be. It sanctified scientific reductionism — analyzing systems by breaking them into their constituent parts for study. These intellectual tools reduced nature to linear processes that could be mapped and measured, and their power led to the greatest advances in scientific discovery in human history. No wonder then that they would be applied to all fields of human activity.

Which was a problem

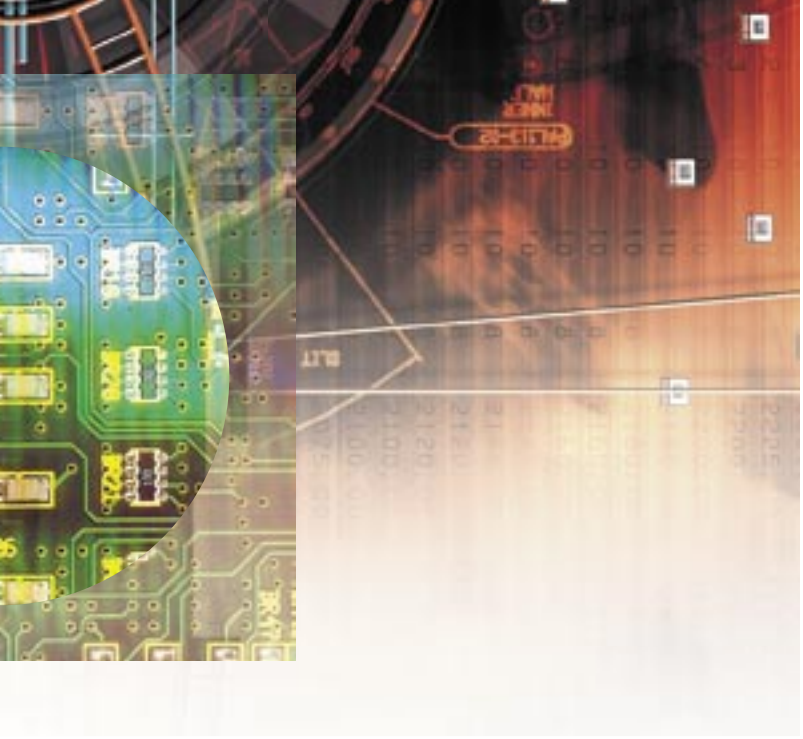
Since Newton, most Western thinking about human society has followed the linear and mechanical assumptions of his physics. Newton bequeathed a paradigm, the mental framework that defines the problems and the tools with which scientists work. And paradigms are enormously powerful. They ripple through the consciousness of an era and decide or influence not only scientific inquiry but everything else, from style to literature to economic, social and political organization. They frame the way we see things, the questions we ask, what we leave out. They provide our metaphors.

Given the pervasive influence of Newton's paradigm, it was only natural that when attention turned, for a variety of reasons in the 1950s, to the problems of poverty in the poor countries, those problems, and assumptions about how to solve them, were understood within a linear framework. This way of thinking was reinforced by the success of the Marshall Plan — the first great experiment in fostering economic development. After World War II, the United States pumped large amounts of capital into the shattered economies of Western Europe, and in a few short years those economies were getting back on their feet. But the conditions were specific to Western Europe, which, unlike most of Latin America, Asia and Africa, had already been a largely industrialized region before the war. Equally important, Europeans decided how the aid would be used. Because these facts were later overlooked, the seemingly linear and mechanistic success of the Marshall Plan still seduces development thinkers and policy-makers, and to this day every new effort at development is rhetorically wrapped in its mantle.

But 50 years of efforts to bring about rapid social and economic development among the world's poor has left us, early in a new century, in frustration and near paralysis. The large infusions of capital that quickly financed reconstruction in post-war Europe simply dissipated in Third World seas of poverty. The promises of development too often went unfulfilled. Too many ambitious plans went awry. The absolute numbers of the poor have soared, the world's cities are strangling, virgin forests have been razed. Despite such disasters, development planners continue to set out goals, plan and implement projects, and await the results. Though they seldom appear as expected, faith in the linear model continues.

Could it be that in development work, as in so much else in modern life, our assumptions, at the deepest level, were wrong? Could it be, as former Czech president Vaclav Havel suggested, that "the relationship to the world that modern science fostered and shaped ... fails to connect with the most intrinsic nature of reality and with natural human experience"?

For more than 30 years, the Inter-American Foundation has been supporting development in a decidedly nonlinear way. We call our approach grassroots development to emphasize that the projects we fund are conceived and managed by local people trying to solve their own community's problems, not by outsiders who decide that what is needed is family planning or education or hydroelectric dams or health care or farm-to-market roads or any of the other magic-bullet ideas that have surfaced and sunk in the last half century. At IAF, with some exceptions, we have limited ourselves to responding to the projects proposed to us. Our representatives in the field may question or challenge those proposals, even suggest revisions. But they



don't write them. We receive hundreds of proposals from all over Latin America and the Caribbean every year, and, with our limited funds, support a few dozen of the ones we think most innovative and most promising. This contrary approach to development was shaped not by an intellectual paradigm, but by experience. Central to the Foundation's formative years were individuals who had spent a lot of time on the ground in the region as Peace Corps volunteers and staff, missionaries or businessmen from retail companies who boosted sales by knowing their customers.

Over roughly the same 30 years, new scientific questions and approaches were appearing, and generating new metaphors for how the world works. Many of those metaphors seem intuitively closer to what the Inter-American Foundation has learned about development than does Newton's clockwork universe. The rest of this essay explores the place of metaphor in development thinking, using examples from classical science and from more recent inquiries into chaos and complexity. If we want to move past the graveyard of failed development efforts, questioning our metaphors is a good first step. For as economist Brian Arthur points out, "an awful lot of policy-making has to do with finding the appropriate metaphor. Conversely, bad policy-making almost always involves finding inappropriate metaphors." (Waldrop: 334)

Sand in the gears

Newton's laws and methods established science's fundamental paradigm for 250 years. But even Newton's gears had some sand in them. From the outset, it was clear that the laws didn't completely explain the solar system. Newton himself confessed frustration at his inability to calculate the moon's orbit. Also, as more observations of the planets were made, the mathematics to account for them became increasingly complicated, and they didn't always work. An intractable problem in calculating Mercury's orbit wasn't solved until Einstein's general theory of relativity in 1917. (Peterson: 94)

Further complications appeared as physicists probed not only the reaches of the solar system but the less and less analogous inner space of the atom, a probe that led to quantum mechanics, a more accurate while more indeterminate (everything about quantum mechanics seems paradoxical) alternative to classical Newtonian mechanics. Quantum mechanics studies the behavior of atoms and the particles that make them up. And studying this behavior has its own, non-Newtonian, implications. Classical science assumes an objective observer whose act of measurement does not affect the thing being measured. But since quantum mechanics measures something as small as an electron within an atom, by bouncing another electron off it, measurement obviously changes something. This led Werner Heisenberg to formulate the Uncertainty Principle: you can't know everything about an atomic particle precisely. If you measure its position, you change its velocity. If you measure velocity, you change position. You must always be uncertain about something. Instead of certainty, you have probabilities.

Other baffling aspects to measurement in quantum mechanics thicken the uncertainty. One is whether quantum particles are particles, or waves — the only two ways energy is transmitted. It turns out that they leap to be whatever you measure for. Use a wave detector and electrons behave like a wave; use a particle detector and they behave like particles. "What we see is what we look for." (Zohar: 44)

The new concepts seemed to mirror much of the confusion and uncertainty of modern human society, and indeed some of them passed into popular speech — "quantum leaps," for example, or "it's all relative." But because they deal with phenomena esoteric to daily human experiences, like behavior near the speed of light, they did not fundamentally alter the

common, linear view of the world. The Newtonian paradigm has not been junked. As physicist Murray Gell-Mann, who won the Nobel Prize for predicting the existence of the subatomic quark, points out, "Newtonian versus Einsteinian mechanics of the solar system [is still used] far more often than its more accurate and sophisticated successor." (Gell-Mann: 87) The earth still spins in a Newtonian orbit and development agencies, like everyone else, continue to expect predictable outcomes to actions.

The edge of chaos

In the last three decades, a new scientific focus on studies of chaos and complexity has emerged. It has generated both enthusiasm and skepticism from scientists and popularizers of scientific concepts. Even though this body of scientific inquiry is still in its infancy, it has already spun off a swarm of attractive metaphors.

Chaos studies focus on nonlinear systems, those in which components cannot act independently, in which the actions of one affect the rest through a web of connections. The phenomenon at the heart of the study of chaos is that in nonlinear systems, small changes in initial conditions can produce vastly divergent outcomes. Such systems are not inherently stable, and in them change can come with alarming abruptness. The example most often cited is the "butterfly effect" first discovered by Ed Lorenz, a meteorologist from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology working in the early 1960s on computer models of the atmosphere. In a time of optimism that science would eventually be able to predict and then control the weather, Lorenz's computer suddenly revealed how an infinitesimal change in initial conditions could produce vastly different results. A butterfly flapping its wings in Indonesia today, for example, could jiggle the atmosphere so as to cause a snowstorm in Chicago next week. Weather systems, while controlled by deterministic laws, are dramatically unstable. "As a result, they allow minuscule changes at one location to percolate through the system so as to bring about major effects somewhere else." (Casti: 90)

Linear thinking leads us to assume that systems are stable and change is gradual. "Intuition and common sense say that small, gradual changes in causes give rise to small, gradual changes in effects. This fundamental principle underlies what's technically termed structural stability, a crucial property built in to most of the mathematical descriptions of natural phenomena we've inherited from classical physics . . . [T]o a great extent, classical physics is the physics of structurally stable systems . . . But not all phenomena of earthly concern are structurally stable. Nor are they continuous . . . [There are] processes in which a small change in the input . . . can lead to a big change in the final result." (Casti: 44-45)

There's stable behavior, like the solar system, and there's pure random behavior, like rolling dice. "What we're finding," says physicist William L. Ditto, "is that most of nature does something in between." (Schwartz) Once scientists started thinking about chaos, they found it everywhere: in water going through a tube, currents in a mountain stream, a cascading pile of sand, the shape of storm clouds, the emergence and extinction of species in the geological record, the rise and fall of ancient civilizations, the New York Stock Exchange. Most systems display regular behavior up to a limit. Water from a faucet drips regularly, until you change the flow slightly. Then it becomes chaotic. Pour sand on a pile and you get a nice symmetrical cone. Keep pouring it and you get sudden avalanches. There's a place called the edge of chaos, and when a system approaches it, the behavior can quickly change in unpredictable ways.

In development, we see the butterfly effect played out again and again in projects IAF has funded. The phenomenon led IAF staff to design a system for describing the results of projects that encompasses unforeseen outcomes and multiplier effects. We report on the tangible results of each project, but we also try to track intangible results: how the confidence derived from successfully addressing one problem motivates a grassroots organization to address a more complex issue, for example, or how differences can be resolved when a community focuses on a common goal. We also look at how a project meant to address a specific problem in a community can be the catalyst for broader changes affecting many more people. An example from Colombia illustrates the point. In 1983, IAF awarded a grant to help a research group in Bogotá begin a program of legal services for female domestic workers, many of whom had unresolved disputes with employers. Over the next few years, the interest gener-

ated by that initiative began to have cascading effects in Colombian society. Additional legal work, the formation of mutual support groups among the workers, public forums and growing media attention, and the emergence of similar groups in other Colombian cities eventually led to a national law, passed in 1988, making social security and health benefits mandatory for all domestic workers and day laborers across the country.

Order for free

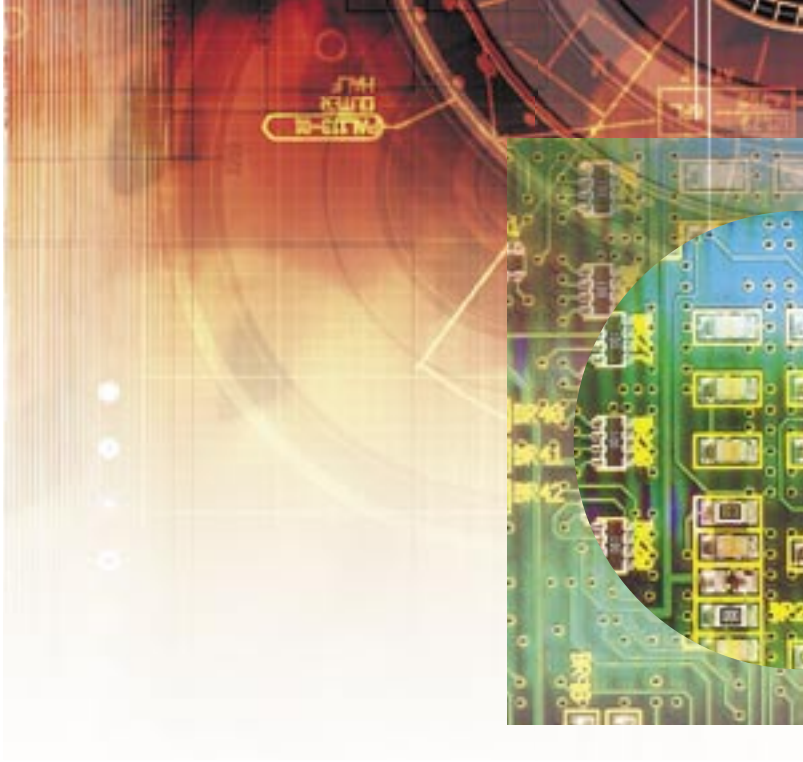
As chaos studies challenged the idea that change is always gradual and predictable, so the notion of complexity challenges the reductionist idea that things are best understood by dividing them into their smaller components. With growing urgency, many scientists have come to believe that the reductionist approach, and the ever-more compartmentalized structure of modern science it produced, was nearing a dead end. The more science learned, it seemed, the less it had to say about many of the world's most complex problems. In 1956, cybernetics pioneer W. Ross Ashby pointed to a divide in science. "For two centuries it has been exploring systems that are either intrinsically simple or that are capable of being analyzed into simple components." But the reductionist method, he said, "is often fundamentally impossible in the complex systems." (quoted in Casti: 172)

Scientific attention began to shift from the pursuit of ever smaller particles to questions about their relationships and how the systems they made up worked. George Cowan, a leading nuclear weapons researcher at Los Alamos, was convinced that science needed a new direction. In 1984, he, Murray Gell-Mann and other prominent scientists, set up the Santa Fe Institute, now one of several research institutions in the U.S., Europe and Japan dedicated to the study of complexity. The most striking thing about that study is how widely it ranges. Complexity science sees underlying similarities in subjects as apparently diverse as the rise and fall of civilizations both ancient and modern, the human immune system, the origins of life, evolution, the brain, ecology, genes, flocking birds, the stock market and the world economy.

One way to state the fascination of complex systems is the commonplace observation that they are more than the sum of their parts. As Gell-Mann points out, "The basic components — atoms, molecules, cells — are each simple enough, but as they interact with one another, new properties emerge." (Berreby) So, such systems are not only complex, they are also adaptive. They have the ability to change. They process information, learn, adapt and self-organize. For scientists, busy the past few centuries calculating exact balances of mass and energy, understanding those "emerging" properties requires a new approach, not refinement of traditional methods. Scientists typically get at these emergent properties by computer simulation of one kind or another. They use computers to model the basic biological mechanisms of evolution and life itself. (Waldrop: 198) Cellular automata — grids of cells that can be programmed by simple rules that govern how they react to their neighbors — are a popular tool. The behavior of many birds swooping through the sky, flowing around obstacles, never crashing into one another but always maintaining the flock, can be modeled in this way. Scientists can watch the interactions and see how patterns and structures emerge. They see emerging order and self-organization. And they look at the outside world, at biology, at evolution, and see similar patterns.

Stuart Kauffman, a theoretical biologist who has long puzzled over this, says there is a "marked preference of complex systems to spontaneously organize themselves into persistent patterns of activity that work." (quoted in Casti: 267) The complex dynamics of the system itself, the richness of the interactions, seem to spontaneously produce patterns of stability and organization. (Waldrop: 11) Kauffman calls it "order for free."

IAF's experience confirms the phenomenon of emerging patterns and emerging order. One of our main intellectual resources is the flow of proposals into our office each year. As we sift through them, a picture emerges of the changes going on at the grassroots in Latin America and the Caribbean. Although it sometimes takes us a while to perceive it, the opportunity to sift all those ideas often gives us an early glimpse of the future. An example from the 1980s is the burgeoning number of proposals from farmers' groups who wanted support for environmental protection. Most development experts, in linear, reductionist fashion, thought of environmental protection and agricultural production as two separate



concerns. Often, they saw farmers clearing land for crops as an environmental threat. But we were receiving proposals from farmers who wanted to increase their production, who wanted better access to markets and who also wanted to preserve the natural environment around their fields. They had made the connection between protection of the forested slopes above them — often in national parks or reserves — and the water they needed for their crops. They recognized that new farming techniques (frequently traditional practices resurrected) were necessary to keep their land from sliding downhill or being leached of nutrients. They wanted natural pesticides rather than expensive chemical poisons.

Before long, it dawned on us that we were funding projects in several countries that simultaneously targeted better livelihoods and biodiversity. Environmental agencies started sending their staff to learn from these projects how the two goals could be blended. The view that a machete-wielding farmer was only a threat to the environment began to change to a view of the farmer, in the right supportive circumstances, as a steward of his surroundings.

A more recent example from Mexico illustrates how responding to proposals rather than planning projects can keep a development agency ahead of the curve. APOYO (Fundación para la Productividad en el Campo) is a Mexican NGO with long experience providing technical support to small-scale farmers in some of the poorest parts of the countryside. Some four or five years ago, the APOYO staff noticed they were running out of clients because most of the young farmers in the communities they served had migrated north looking for wages they could send home to their families. APOYO approached IAF with a new proposal: to encourage linkages between the hometown associations of the migrants in the United States and the communities they'd left behind. Migrants have since provided a wide range of services to their hometowns, not only in Mexico but also in El Salvador, Haiti and the Dominican Republic. The phenomenon was the subject of the first major conference on remittances and development, held in 2001 and sponsored by the IAF, the World Bank and the Washington Office of the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean. Now, IAF is discussing co-funding development projects in Latin American communities with hometown associations of migrants from those communities working in the U.S.

The implications of new metaphors

Chaos and complexity are new sciences, full of intriguing ideas and enveloped in the buzz of excitement that goes with new ventures. They haven't produced a scientific paradigm, as Newton's physics did over three centuries ago, but they have already spun off a rich assortment of metaphors, many of which seem intuitively right for the issues that development theorists and practitioners encounter. At this stage, new metaphors may be the most valuable contributions of the new sciences to development thinking. A good starting point in the search for appropriate development metaphors is the basic distinction between linear and nonlinear systems. Simple, linear systems behave predictably. If we drop a stone it falls at a measurable speed. Nonlinear processes generate surprises, like the weather system can when a butterfly revs up. Sadly, attempts to solve the problems of poverty at home or abroad have generated more surprises than successes. All too often, major resources and good intentions go into the system, but what comes out is frighteningly far from expectations.

To use the language of the new sciences, a development project is an intervention in nonlinear and complex adaptive systems. When it has been planned with linear methods and expectations, chaos theory

suggests what can happen. A development project fueled with lots of money, mapped in great detail and driven by experts can represent a very significant change in "initial conditions." As things get rolling on the ground, what actually happens often begins to diverge from expectations and as results feed back the divergence widens, sometimes catastrophically. Low-cost housing projects give rise to slums worse than the housing they replaced. New freeways give rise to unprecedented traffic jams. (Casti: 271 ff.) A development plan meant to ease population pressures by opening up agricultural land with a road ends up destroying vast swaths of rain forest, exhausting the soil and leaving the very people it was meant to help in even more desperate poverty.

Several years ago, I stood on the shores of a man-made lake in the central mountains of Honduras, the country assigned the role of electricity producer in a massive development scheme for Central America. Several huge dams were built to produce power for Honduras' cities and leave enough for sale to its neighbors. Workers were recruited from poor rural areas, roads were cut through virgin forest, the concrete walls went up and the turbines were installed. But when construction ended, so did the jobs. With nowhere to go, many of the workers stayed to begin farming on the steep slopes above the reservoirs. That quickly led to erosion, and by the time I saw them, enough silt had already slid into the reservoirs to literally create islands, tree were growing on the islands, electric production was down, and Honduras was suffering periodic power blackouts. Additional investments of tens of millions of dollars were eventually needed to start restoring vegetation to the slopes.

Similar examples are common in the last half century of development assistance. Over and over, ambitious development schemes are planned with impressive internal coherence, and then imposed from the top down on a complex human system. But because "it's effectively impossible to cover every conceivable situation, top-down systems are forever running into combinations of events they don't know how to handle . . . and they all too often grind to a halt in a dither of indecision." (Waldrop: 279) The problem is in trying to deal with poverty by the reductionist approach of breaking it into its components. At various times, development planners believed that building the physical infrastructure of roads, bridges and harbors was the key to development, or that education was or urban housing or modernizing agriculture or micro-enterprise. It's not that any of these are wrong. What is wrong is assuming that you can change one factor in a complex situation and then predict the outcome.

What would a nonlinear development model look like? Metaphors from chaos and complexity studies suggest that it would look very much like what we call grassroots, participatory, bottom-up development. There is an almost eerie fit between the way we talk about grassroots development and the way scientists talk about the evolution of complex systems: "Instead of being designed from the top down, the way a human engineer would do it, living systems always seem to emerge from the bottom up, from a population of much simpler systems." (Waldrop: 278). And listen to a scientist describing how to mimic lifelike behavior on a computer: "[S]imulate populations of simple units instead of one big complex unit. Use local control instead of global control. Let the behavior emerge from the bottom up, instead of being specified from the top down. And while you're at it, focus on ongoing behavior instead of the final result . . . [L]iving systems never really settle down."

The responsive grassroots development approach sees in human communities the same capacity for self-organization that scientists see in all complex adaptive

systems. Accordingly, it relies more on the capacity of poor people to understand their own problems and craft their own solutions — often in dialogue with local technicians — than it relies on projects designed from the outside. It emphasizes the uniqueness of each project. It looks for success, as much, if not more, in intangible outcomes like increased human capabilities as it does in quantitative project results. It recognizes that complex systems are adaptive, and it seeks to strengthen adaptiveness so that it can be carried forward to the next development challenge.

How would development change under the influence of post-Newtonian scientific metaphors? The change from linear, mechanistic metaphors would be quite radical. If we stopped thinking of development as a linear process, one of the first things to disappear would be the illusion of control inherent in projects designed from the top down. The littered landscape of development fiascos in the past half century demonstrates how little control project designers and managers actually have had, but the illusion continues. Control is power, and metaphors drawn from studies of chaos and complexity suggest that power must be ceded and dispersed downwards to permit adaptive behavior and the emergence of new patterns.

With control would go the idea of predictability. The demand for predictability unrealistically forces complex processes into the framework of simple models. That distortion is at the root of development failures. With different metaphors, development projects would no longer be thought of as analogous to laboratory experiments. Goals would be clear, but the focus would be much broader than the scorecard or checklist marking their attainment. It would expand to encompass what happens on the way to the goals, and would accommodate the reality that as a complex system evolves and adapts, goals too can change.

This means, of course, that the field of project evaluation would change, as would the definition of success. Evaluation would become less a measurement of progress toward externally set goals and more of a feedback mechanism into a human group's evolution. We would still have numbers, but we would pay more attention to stories. In the place of control and predictability, there would be more observation, more listening. Development workers would necessarily spend more time out of their offices and move closer to the grassroots. Rather than function as project designers and managers, they would have a more modest, but much more exciting role, something like Waldrop's example (331-334) of whitewater guides who watch the currents, eddies and hydraulics, observing and occasionally sticking an oar in when it may do some good. Becoming observers, development workers might wind up doing longer tours of duty in the same place. Now, many development workers move around too much. They plan a project, and by the time it's up and running, or down and out, they're gone to another assignment. "They never see their mistakes," the head of one Honduran NGO told me.

Not all development workers would necessarily welcome the change in role. Comparing scientific work in complexity compared to classical science, economist Brian Arthur told Waldrop (334), "I think there's a personality that goes with this kind of thing. It's people who like process and pattern, as opposed to people who are comfortable with stasis and order." Projects would be smaller — remember the butterfly's wing — and much more numerous. Gell-Mann (356), pointing out that large-scale projects often create environmental damage while hardly helping poor people at all, noted that "the same people can often be aided very effectively through large numbers of small efforts, applied locally, as for example in the practice known as microlending." The individuality and uniqueness of projects would be recognized.

The idea of replicability would be rethought. In linear thinking, a successful project becomes a model to be applied elsewhere. Prevailing metaphors encourage an assumption identified by Gow (381) "that project conditions are generally similar, irrespective of the differing contexts." Metaphors from complexity would shift attention to what is truly replicable about development projects: an approach that encourages local creativity and initiative, that emphasizes process over results and that lets projects evolve in the interplay between the participants, their experiences and their reflections. Development workers, instead of making decisions about what is replicable, would become facilitators, enabling representatives of other communities to visit and see first hand what in the successful project they would wish to replicate.

Such an approach might diminish, if not eliminate, one of the uglier aspects of development work — the

tendency to blame failed development efforts on the "target population's" supposedly inferior culture. In typical linear thinking, development workers design a project and set about implementing it. When the local people fail to carry out their assigned roles, the frustrated expert blames their defective culture. Grassroots experience, on the other hand, teaches that often it is precisely the values of the local culture that drive successful projects. Of course, moving resources to a nonlinear development model would not mean the end of government-to-government, or international bank-to-government, foreign assistance. Just as the Newtonian model still effectively answers many scientific questions, so the linear relationship in development aid is often appropriate. Vaccination campaigns are an obvious example.

The trick is to broaden our range of metaphors about development and to know which are appropriate to a given situation. And if we want people to truly participate in development efforts that they will carry on after the foreign assistance ends, then butterflies and self-organizing flocks of birds should be among our common metaphors.

Patrick Breslin is IAF'S vice president for external affairs.

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Left: *Reserva Salto Morato. Courtesy Fundação Boticário de Proteção à Natureza*

Striking A Balance

By Paula Durbin *Photos: Paulo de VC. Melo Júnior*

Business, conservation and development connect for a sustainable future.

As a socially responsible corporation, O Boticário, a cosmetic manufacturer, is one of Brazil's most giving. Its generosity has underwritten projects ranging from a day-care center for pre-school children of the company's employees to Fundação Boticário de Proteção à Natureza (FBPN), the corporation's primary conduit for furthering conservation. Partners in Boticário and the FBPN's efforts have included the Catholic Children's Ministry, the Brazilian government's Instituto Brasileiro do Meio Ambiente e dos Recursos Naturais Renovaveis, The Nature Conservancy, the Avina Foundation and Duke University. Now, FBNP is taking forward an initiative that expands its focus on a sustainable future, and it is joined by the Inter-American Foundation.

In June of 2001, FBPN and the IAF agreed to commit $1,100,000, or $550,000 each, over five years to an Eco-development Fund which would support organizations developing income-generating mechanisms that favor the environment. FBPN's investment, the largest single contribution from a corporate foundation to an IAF collaboration, becomes even more significant in view of FBPN's assumption of most of the administration costs for the projects selected. "It's a marriage of equals," said Judith Morrison, IAF's senior representative for South America. "Boticário is a leader in environmental conservation and the IAF is a leader on the grassroots side."

The partners are truly in a position to learn from each other's expertise. IAF is new to the level of rigor FBPN applies in its conservation endeavors, and FBNP is new to self-help development. Since its founding in 1990, the Brazilian foundation has furthered its environmental mission mainly through scientific research, education and its stewardship of the Reserva Salto Morato, the largest contiguous remnant of Brazil's Atlantic rain forest, 95 percent of which has disappeared. According to Liane Ingberman, who handles FBPN's communications out of its downtown Curitiba office, FBPN is currently funding 890 research projects culled by staff, panels of experts and FBNP's board of directors from among the 500 responses received annually to its call for proposals. Educational activities run the gamut from training to bilingual scientific journals in Portuguese and English to programs for school children. Two locations in a downtown shopping center owned by Miguel Krigsner, O Boticário's civic-minded founder and president, are devoted to instilling conservation values in Curitiba's youngest citizens: a puppet theater and an interactive exhibit space with everything scaled to their eye level.

The launching pad for FBPN's foray into grassroots development was, however, the Reserva Salto Morato, bought by FBPN in conjunction with The Nature Conservancy in 1994. Located in Guaraqueçaba, a four-hour drive from Curitiba, the 2,340-hectare Reserva is the site for scientific research projects

(including 15 masters and doctoral theses currently in progress) as well as a center that trains 240 professionals a year in conservation, eco-tourism and, given the reserve's opening to visitors in 1996, park management. But the Reserva functions primarily as a sanctuary for 328 species of birds and 83 species of mammals as well as every tree and 20 percent of the reptiles native to the surrounding state of Paraná. In 1999 it was declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO.

To succeed on this scale, FBPN's protection of the Reserva's precious biodiversity, as well as the recovery of some of the Reserva's lush growth of 50 years ago, required a human dimension early on. On the edge of the Reserva is Vila Morato, a community of some 30 families who, until FBPN appeared, eked out a precarious existence by poaching hearts of palm, or *palmitos*, in the forest at night. This illegal harvest endangered not only the palm tree and the animals it sheltered and nourished but ultimately jeopardized the very livelihood derived from a scarce resource on its way to extinction. "The tree takes seven years to grow to the size where the *palmito* was being removed," explained Ingberman, "but it takes 12 years for the tree to begin to reseed itself. So we had to give the community another source of income." At first, FBNP tried to interest the residents in making stuffed animals and puppets for the kits distributed for its life skills program in partnership with the Children's Ministry, *Dr. Botica educando para a vida*. But the men considered this women's work; crafting bamboo artifacts was rejected as well. Finally, an expert in natural fibers pointed out an abundantly available local plant that could be woven into baskets, the idea took hold, and Vila Morato residents quickly became proficient artisans.

O Boticário had been on the verge of purchasing raffia shopping baskets from Thailand but quickly switched the order to Vila Morato. Baskets handcrafted in Brazil from natural native fibers made good business sense, reinforcing O Boticário's promotion of its use of natural ingredients in products specifically adapted to the needs of Brazilian consumers. With that initial order, income in Vila Morato skyrocketed and the residents formed a cooperative. However, those first shopping baskets, meant for use in the

Native plants are collected, dried and separated into fine strands that are tied to a post and braided to produce cord for baskets.

Because of the serious social and environmental consequences of cutting immature wild hearts of palm, the practice is illegal in Brazil, but it persists unless alternatives are offered to communities that have lived from the illicit harvest. Pupunha, a faster growing species of palm, is now cultivated plantation-style in Morato to supplement income from crafts without threatening the environment.

Morato artisan Vera Agostinho dos Santos displays baskets for sale at the center the community built with IAF's assistance to the artisans.

Josias do Rosário, of the Associação dos Artesãos do Morato, uses paina, *aquatic grasses, to form the base of a basket he completes with cipó vines and bamboo.*

shops rather than for sale, were so sturdy that stocks didn't require frequent replenishing. There would be future orders, but not right away. Clearly the artisans had to learn the technical and managerial aspects of running a business to cope with fluctuating market demand and diversify their clientele. They also needed to prepare to step up production.

The result was an application to the IAF presented by FBPN on behalf of the artisans' association. The goal was to improve living conditions in Vila Morato through shoring up the crafts industry and to achieve some autonomy for the new enterprise by making the community accountable to another source of funding. The proposal caught Morrison's eye. She visited Vila Morato, spoke with FBPN staff in Curitiba and obtained IAF support for the artisans. Additionally, said Morrison, "As a result of our conversations, FBPN and IAF decided we should expand the project into a joint venture to provide alternatives for other low-income communities — in the Northeast and in environmentally protected areas."

The site of the first project supported by the Fund, Café com Floresta: Ecodesenvolvimento e Corredores de Biodiversiadade, is the area surrounding Morro do Diabo State Park in Pontal do Paranapanema, one of the largest protected expanses in the state of Sao Paulo, where the remaining fragments of the Atlantic rain forest total just 1.85 percent of the original cover. The grantee, Instituto de Pesquisa Ecológica, an NGO whose mission is to preserve biodiversity, is working with an association of the subsistence farmers resettled there in response to the call for land reform by the Movimento dos Sem Terra. The goal is 80 corridors of organic coffee cultivated in the shade of indigenous trees using technology and techniques that result in a greater yield, distinguish the product in the marketplace (since the coffee is not exposed to toxic chemicals) and don't harm the environment. Simultaneously, the corridors facilitate the movement of wildlife among the isolated fragments of preserved forest, connecting the ecosystem and making it less vulnerable.

According to Sandro Menezes Silva, who coordinates FBPN's educational and conservation programs, the Eco-development Fund's first two calls for proposals drew 178 applications and resulted in four awards.

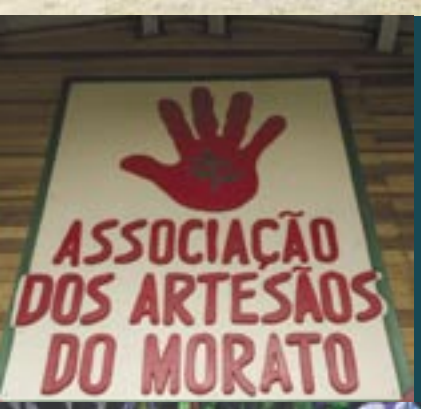
No one is apologizing for this level of scrutiny to determine the soundness of a submission's environmental component. "A desired result of the Fund is the education of the proponent when the proposal is rejected on these grounds," Morrison explained. "Organic agriculture or *manejo forestal* may not necessarily be conservation-related but can actually damage the environment. A proposal to restore fishing stock might appear to have benefits on the human development side, but if it didn't address the contamination in the water, it would be a losing proposition for the conservationists. In a sense, we are pioneering a concept and not a lot of activities fit into the framework yet." The object is the success of this conservation-with development initiative without compromising standards. But, said Silva, "We are adopting a more pro-active posture and seeking out organizations with a track record that can really achieve this balance: improvement in the quality of life along with environmental preservation."

The Fund's most recent grantee, Eco Oficina Peixe-Boi, in Vila da Barra de Mamanguape, Pernambuco, has worked for 15 years toward that end in its efforts to save the marine manatee. So docile and easily caught that its nickname is *o bicho bobo,* or the stupid beast, the animal was hunted or fished indiscriminately to the point where its population has dwindled to between 300 and 500 and is seriously endangered, according to IBAMA. To rescue the species, Fundação para Preservação e Estudos dos Mamíferos Aquáticos, a foundation for aquatic mammals, offered people in traditional hunting communities the opportunity to assemble stuffed replicas of both the marine manatee and the Amazonian manatee, a less endangered species, for sale in supermarkets and hotels. Revenues are invested in the NGO's conservation efforts. With its award from the Fund, the workshop, which is one of the main sources of income locally, will increase production and jobs for community residents. It will add porpoises and whales to its line, build a headquarters, modernize its machinery, fine tune its team's skills and train 38 young adults in sewing, cutting and embroidery. "As soon as the fishing people see the money they can make from the stuffed animals, they stop hunting the manatees," said Silva.

The community center includes a classroom where artisans attend classes covering curriculum through the fourth grade.

PAULA DURBIN

A community in the Brazilian Northeast manufactures marine manatees instead of hunting a species in danger of extinction. These play animals are in an environmental space for children in Miguel Krigsner's shopping center in downtown Curitiba.



PAULA DURBIN

O Boticário and the Children's Ministry of the Catholic Church sponsor an educational series that includes a puppet theater in Curitiba. Krigsner considers the joint effort one of his corporation's most important social projects. "When the puppet talks to the child, the child establishes a special relationship with the character," he says.

Similarly, people in Vila Morato no longer need to cut down the Reserva's wild palms. Individual income from baskets is the same as from the *palmitos*, with some important qualifications. In the first place, said artisan Silvio Batista dos Santos, "It's much easier work." Additionally, only men could cut the trees, and as soon as their sons were big enough to help, they were taken out of school. Now, with men and women weaving baskets, household income is greater, and the cycle of interrupted schooling may have been broken. Furthermore, in one week the artisans can fill their current monthly orders, including those from a new client, Pão de Açúcar, a grocery chain. Some workers look forward to structuring this down time by harvesting *palmitos* again — legally, from rows planted around their homes with a species of imperial palm that matures at just four years.

The artisans seem committed to making the basket industry work. With IAF's support, they have a sparkling new community center that offers adult education courses, a storage facility for their inventory, a shop where park visitors can buy their crafts and a community kitchen. They built it themselves with volunteer labor. "It's a place the community constructed and owns, that is separate from the reserve and O Boticário," said Morrison. "The community has sweat equity in the center and will run a business there."

Morrison continues to advise FBPN staff on project selection, field visit and challenges to anticipate. From FBPN, says Morrison, "The IAF has learned that there are variations in ecological development, that we need to incorporate more environmental indicators into our analyses of grassroots development, that there is a lot to be learned about analyzing rural production projects. Boticário has that savvy and sophistication and has been very good about sharing this information. The hope is that this will permeate through the IAF." Step by step, a new phase in self-help development is moving forward. "The fund is an opportunity to be innovative," says Morrison, "and we are confident that the projects will have long-term results."

Megan Savage, IAF intern, and Juliana Menucci, IAF's local liaison in Brazil, contributed to this article.

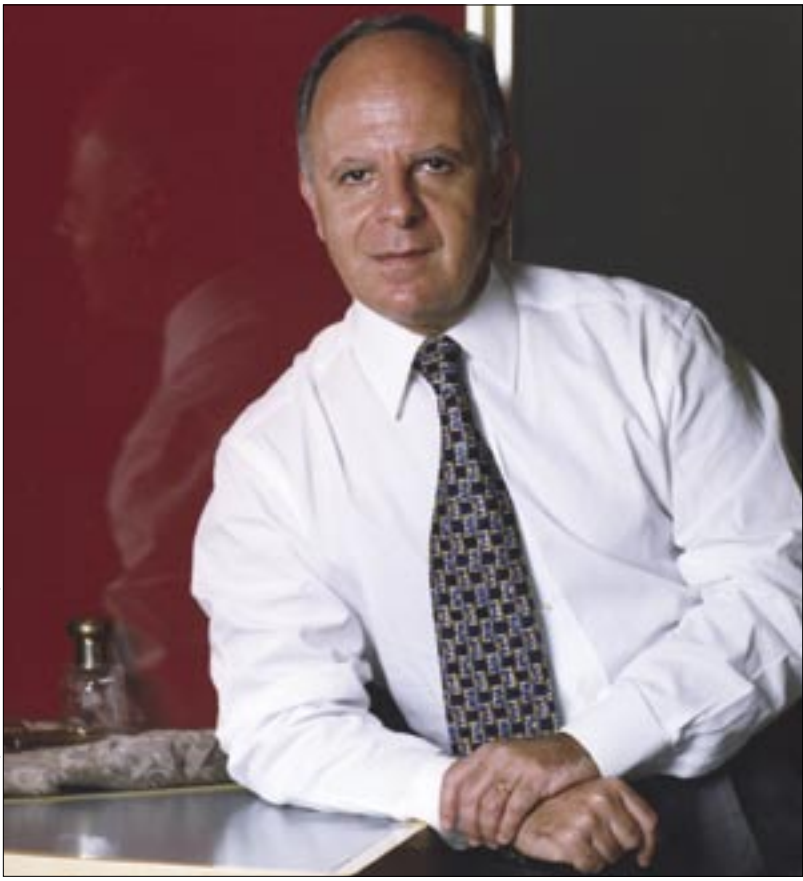
Q&A

Striking a Balance: Miguel Krigsner

O Boticário's founder drives the corporation's success and commitment.

Picturesque is how Miguel Krigsner, O Boticário's founder and president, describes his company's evolution from a downtown Curitiba pharmacy into a major cosmetic manufacturer. A graduate biochemist, Krigsner, who was born in Bolivia and came to Brazil as a child, began his professional career by experimenting with formulas for lotions and shampoos in between filling prescriptions. In the mid-1970s, when the Brazilian market was closed to imports, he saw an opportunity to expand the clientele for his blends by selling them in the Curitiba airport, a venue that proved strategic. The brand was initially popularized through flight attendants who bought the products and resold them to family and friends throughout Brazil. This informal distribution channel, assisted by word-of-mouth endorsements, was the beginning of a franchising system, which, says Krigsner, "allowed the company to develop very rapidly using the capital of third parties."

Today O Boticário's state-of-the-art plant in São José dos Pinhais, in greater Curitiba, operates with a work force of more than 10,000 employees who turn out an inventory of more than 600 items. O Boticário's diversified lines for men, women and children are marketed in Brazil and abroad through 2,500 franchises and outlets, including more than 400 in Japan, proof of the products' quality, Krigsner maintains, since Japan's protectionism is couched in terms of standards. Krigsner's business leadership has received considerable media coverage in Brazil, much of it available on the Internet. But when *Grassroots Development* met with Krigsner in his executive suite last fall, we asked him about the dimension he has given to O Boticário corporate citizenship.



COURTESY FUNDAÇÃO BOTICÁRIO DE PROTEÇÃO À NATUREZA

Miguel Krigsner

Q What accounts for your social commitment?

A One of the things that most shaped my thinking is that I am the son of survivors of the Second World War, the Holocaust. My mother left Germany before the war and my father left Poland after spending the war hidden in a friend's house. They went to Bolivia, one of the few countries that accepted Holocaust refugees because of an interest in bringing people to contribute to the development of a country that even now is among the poorest and most underdeveloped in the world. His childhood

left my father with a great sense of persecution and other psychological problems. And so it seemed to me that social differences — whether based on religious, racial or economic differences — are a cancer on civilization. The greatest problem of today's world is social differences, and economic differences bring social differences. Everything that we see happening is directly related to this problem of the poor and the rich. As an idealist, I have always thought about how to change this at least a little, like a drop in the sea, a needle in a haystack. Ever since I was very young, I have personally wanted to make a difference, to connect my work to a social contribution. Our business, beyond its economic role, gives jobs to 14,000 people, which is already a significant social contribution. But I felt this wasn't enough.

Q How did you to become involved in environmental issues?

A I was a student when Brazil was becoming aware of the environmental problems the world is living through. We're talking about 1977-1978, and these problems weren't really felt here because Brazilians have nature all around them and they can't imagine what it is to live without it. That's why in less than 50 years *la floresta atlantica* was almost totally destroyed and only 5 percent of it remains. At the university, I was around ecologists and others who called my attention to these matters, but I didn't feel like joining a movement that lets you raise a flag and struggle against an enormous machine. With the development of the business, I began to feel there was a way to be involved in environmental questions, so in 1990 we decided to create Fundação Boticário de Proteção à Natureza.

Q How did you envision the Fundação at the time?

A We created a foundation because foundations are regulated by a public ministry and you have to have a clear objective that cannot be geared toward profits. We decided that it would work seriously and scientifically in its sponsorship of research projects. The Fundação started out very small, with $200,000 a year, which is still significant, and we proposed to do things very slowly, step by step, *muy despacio*.

Through the Fundação we have acquired great credibility, first with academics and second with consumers because of our social contributions. To consumers, who are more concerned with social issues every day, the Fundação associates Boticário with a contemporary outlook and gives the brand credibility, but this kind of perception is very gradual in Brazil. We didn't want to use the nature thing as marketing appeal — "protect greenery and buy Boticário" — and we don't promote the notion because it would be taking money from the social objective or taking the social objective and putting it into advertising.

Q What about Boticário's financial support for the Fundação?

A We allocate 1 percent of our gross income to social investment. At least 50 percent of that goes to the Fundação for environmental projects and the rest to other social projects. It's a lot of money, and it's not connected to a tax deduction (which would be very small in Brazil) or any other kind of benefit. The 1 percent comes from the gross, not the net, because we can have a year that doesn't go very well and our projects for the medium and long term can't depend on whether the company is doing well or badly.

We have also created a fund for the eventuality that the company can't make a social investment for one or two years or if suddenly 1 percent may no longer be sufficient. The intention is for the fund to grow slowly with donations from the company and from others who see the seriousness of this institution's proposals. Whether or not this fund grows, the Fundação will, of course, always have the help and the infrastructure that the company can offer, but an independent institution is part of the plan.

As long as Boticário exists, it will put money into this thing. I see it as a moral obligation: A company that has succeeded very well in the market has to return something to the society in which it lives. Brazil is one of the most heavily taxed countries in

the world, and you could say, "I pay so much in taxes; let the government do this work." But there is a question of conscience and within the Jewish religion there is *tsedaka*. What is it? It's a word that says that you have to do good for your neighbor. However, the pleasure in doing good isn't what your neighbor is receiving but the pleasure you receive. Maybe it's crazy, but I derive great personal satisfaction from being able to do something for someone else. It's a return that you get back.

Q How do you explain this investment to your stockholders?

A There are just two stockholders. I own 80 percent of the company so I just look in the mirror and say, "Miguel, we are going to invest in this and that's that." It's convenient and I don't have to give a lot of explanations.

Q How long did it take for the foundation to acquire a development component?

A Six or seven years. Needs are so great in a country like Brazil that you can't attack 40 things at once. You have to focus and many times say, "No, I can't," as unpleasant as it may sound. When we began, many people asked whether the idea was to take care of monkeys and parrots in a country with so many problems with children, which is very shortsighted because the child is included in the nature we are protecting. Slowly, we began to work on other social problems. We wanted to help communities like the one in Guaraqueçaba where we have our reserve. We can't say to a person who is hungry or who has a sick child, "You're not going to cut down the *palmito*." These people who don't cut down the *palmitos* need some other means of subsistence. So we launched a crafts project.

Q Do you distinguish philanthropy from social responsibility?

A Philanthropy is good but it is better to teach someone to fish than to give him a fish. Philanthropy can become a sort of paternalism, giving a sack of rice and creating a dependency. Carrying out sustainable development projects where people work and find their sustenance is important. There has been a change in mentality in Brazil and increasingly companies take on social projects. We have the Instituto Ethos [an IAF grantee—*Ed.*], for example, which shows how a company should work with social issues. Often companies have good intentions but don't know where to begin. Many seek us out for a benchmarking as to how to work. Increasingly we are invited to speak about our projects and I think that this is a good thing. This change in mentality isn't just happening in Brazil but the whole world; even the United States, with all that is going on there, is beginning to have a little more vision of an eco-planet. We need to be sensitive to the fact that we live dependent on one another and that each one of us has a right to live in dignity. In the Jewish religion, there is another phrase, not a phrase but a thought, that if someone is hungry in the world, we are all responsible.

Q How do you find the time for all you do?

A I think that the more you do in life, the more time you find. And when you love what you do, you find the time to do it. I want to be a good person in the social sense, a good businessman, a good husband, a good father— I have two daughters who are my life—and I also have an important function in the Jewish community here. There are times when the company absorbs me because this is a country in which it isn't so easy to work. In the final analysis, what is the objective of a company? Bluntly, the objective is to make a profit, and in my vision the greatest affliction of mankind is to have to run after material wealth. I admit that sometimes stress hits hard, but life is so short that you have to fill it with things that give you pleasure. When you can work very well in a business and can also do this social work, which is so important, it fills your soul and that's good.

Developmental Abilities

By Eduardo Rodríguez-Frías

The cost to society of excluding people with disabilities is enormous. A society cannot achieve true democracy unless people with disabilities fully participate in every aspect of civil society.

— Tom Harkin, United States Senator

According to the World Bank, 500 million individuals worldwide can be described as disabled. Of those, 80 percent live in developing nations and two-thirds live below the poverty line. Vulnerability links poverty to disability in a causal relationship. Poor people are likelier to be disabled. They are exposed to, and are usually defenseless against, disease, malnutrition and violence; they do the dangerous work that others refuse; their living environment can be unsanitary and otherwise adverse to their physical well-being. Handicapped individuals know poverty because they are routinely denied employment as well as access to social services, education and community life.

The disabled are often pitied, regarded as defective and deemed burdens. They may be hidden away by families, institutionalized under deplorable conditions and forgotten by government agencies, and condemned to a fruitless existence by society. At times, laws have prevented disabled individuals from voting, owning property, marrying or otherwise leading full lives. The last state law supporting the eugenicists' agenda in the United States was only invalidated in 1979; just decades earlier, Nazi Germany's official policy toward the disabled resulted in more than a quarter of a million deaths and half a million sterilizations. More than 50 years later, people with disabilities still struggle to be accepted. In recent decades, they, and their respective advocacy organizations, have joined together to make their voices heard.

SEAN SPRAGUE

ACOPASANTAL members sort materials for cotton mattresses.

Disabilities and Development

Over the past couple of years, I have lived and worked with Oscar Ruiz, a friend whose movement and coordination are limited by cerebral palsy. Oscar and I represented the IAF at a World Bank conference on disability and development, held on Dec. 3, 2002, the United Nations' International day of Persons with Disabilities. Among the prominent advocates for the disabled who spoke were James Wolfenson, World Bank president; Queen Noor of Jordan, chair of the Landmine Survivors Network; and Senator Edward Kennedy. I was already aware that the millions of dollars allocated to world poverty alleviation are channeled to infrastructure, schools, public transportation, health care facilities and services that are rarely accessible to the disabled. My experience at the

conference prompted me to ask how the disabled fit into development assistance, whose goal is empowerment of the disadvantaged. More immediately, I wanted to know how they fit into IAF's portfolio. As long as a pattern of exclusion persists, the goal of eradicating extreme poverty and providing universal primary education by 2015, articulated at the United Nations Millennium Summit, will not be achieved.

So far, my search for information has been both frustrating and encouraging. It has been frustrating because the disabled constitute an invisible minority in this hemisphere. Reliable statistics simply do not exist on the disabled population of Latin America and the Caribbean, where for more than 30 years the Inter-American Foundation has supported the grassroots initiatives of the marginalized and excluded. But while the Foundation doesn't maintain statistics on the disabled individuals that our grants have reached, I was able to confirm that disabled people have benefited from IAF's funding. Furthermore, among IAF's grantees are disabled people's organizations (DPOs) that have addressed prevention, education, rehabilitation and job development for their constituents. IAF's grants are modest and their focus is local; they can't change the world for the disabled. They do however prove that DPOs, judged by the same criteria as all other applicants, can compete successfully for development funding. More importantly, they provide vivid examples of how individuals with disabilities can work toward a better life.

Some of IAF's more recent DPO grantees are in El Salvador which I visited in April 2003. The visibility of numerous military and civilian casualties of 12 years of bitter civil conflict has increased public awareness of the plight of the country's wider disabled population. Just two years before my visit, groundbreaking legislation was enacted to protect the basic rights of this constituency. This included mandatory hiring quotas, although just 35 percent of Salvadoran companies had complied by 2003. Furthermore, during a recent election, officials were embarrassed to learn they had neglected to repeal a law that prevented individuals with certain disabilities from holding public office. At the time of my visit, IAF's El Salvador portfolio no longer included any active grantees working with the disabled. So I reached back to former grantees to share their experiences and help me understand the role of the IAF empowering these individuals.

¡Las Maravillas del Tacto!

Between 1990 and 2001, the IAF invested $101,100 in Asociación Cooperativa de Producción Artesanal Santa Lucia R.L. (ACOPASANTAL). The cooperative, owned and operated by blind workers in San Salvador since 1977, grew out of an even earlier training program at the Salvadoran School for the Blind, which in 1945, with just two workers and $22 in working capital, set up the first workshop for the production of cotton mattresses by blind workers. Thanks to start-up donations of raw materials from Salvadoran businesses and production, office and storage facilities provided by the Society for the Protection of the Blind, the business prospered. By 1989, the cooperative had 20 members and owned real estate and equipment valued at $140,000 as well as liquid assets worth $37,000. Its slogan, *Las Maravillas del Tacto* (the wonders of touch), sends multiple messages, referring to the compensation for the absence of sight with an enhanced sense of touch, to the quality of the cooperative's products and to the members' spirit of accomplishment.

Unlike most workshops for the disabled, which tend to be run by non-disabled individuals and subsidized by governments, ACOPASANTAL is completely owned, managed and staffed by its visually-impaired members. This feature of the cooperative's administration and structure should have confirmed the extraordinary abilities of these workers, but stigmas and stereotypes proved difficult to overcome. For the first 13 years after its incorporation, ACOPASANTAL was unable to qualify for credit, precisely because it was a business owned and operated by the handicapped. Through capital re-investment and membership contributions, it endured. In 1990 ACOPASANTAL received an IAF grant to improve the quality of life of its workers and their 44 dependents, diversify its product line, increase its membership and double its production and profits. Due to unforeseen difficulties, extensions of the grant period stretched the three-year project into an 11-year partnership, making IAF's commitment one of duration rather than intensity.

Development, a slow process under the best of circumstances, proved even slower for ACOPASANTAL,

and not always because of the members' impaired vision. To begin with, the grantee had trouble obtaining the required construction permits from the Salvadoran government. Additionally, road and public transportation conditions were such that the blind workers could not easily reach the new site. Furthermore, the end of civil war brought the liberalization of government's procurement process and ACOPASANTAL lost to another bidder its best client, the Salvadoran armed forces which had for years purchased 70 percent of its mattresses. The dollarization of the economy and a shift toward European markets by Guatemalan fabric suppliers caused problems with purchasing raw materials. The 2001 earthquakes damaged some of the cooperative's buildings. Even increasing ACOPASANTAL's membership proved a challenge. New recruits, accustomed to the marginal existence reserved for the blind, were often psychologically ill-equipped to take charge of their lives and would quit.

All of these factors jeopardized the goal of increased production and profitability, but ACOPASANTAL managed to sustain its members and their families. The IAF award, invested in diversification and expansion, allowed the cooperative to cope with the globalization of El Salvador's economy while other local enterprises foundered. To bolster a sagging bottom line, it shifted production to foam mattresses, bed spreads, table cloths, furniture, upholstery, and leather and vinyl goods. Mattress purchases by agencies providing relief after the 2001 earthquakes also boosted sales, allowing ACOPASANTAL to pay back 80 percent of the debt accumulated during its most difficult years. Over the period of its grant, ACOPASANTAL increased its participation in the community, partnering with Habitat International to build houses for its members and for sighted individuals as well.

These initiatives, both business and social, continue. José Crisanto, ACOPASANTAL's manager, observed with irony and humor that ACOPASANTAL must find ways to increase revenues without a national crisis, a nod to the cooperative's brisk sales during the civil war and after the 2001 earthquakes. Blinded at a young age by an infection that would not have caused permanent damage had proper medical services been available, Crisanto well understands the relationship between poverty and disability. Cooperative members now want to branch into a bakery, and he is looking for a low-interest loan or a grant. Typical of the concerns expressed by representatives of donor agencies is how the cooperative will comply with reporting requirements without access to e-mail. For the sighted, the problem would be easily resolved with a small purchase. But, although two cooperative members are computer literate, software accessible to the blind is beyond the group's means.

Undaunted, ACOPASANTAL is, with five other institutions, actively mobilizing a network that allows Salvadoran organizations of the blind to exchange experiences and resources and work together on a better quality of life. During my visit, ACOPASANTAL's workshop was being repainted. Through friends and neighbors, the members became aware that their shop needed a paint job, maintenance they as entrepreneurs felt essential to an atmosphere conducive to business. While ACOPASANTAL failed to double its production and profit margin, two goals of its proposal to the IAF, merely surviving the unanticipated defection of its best customer is perhaps as significant an accomplishment. The bottom line is that ACOPASANTAL has obviously succeeded in offering 20 visually-impaired Salvadorans an alternative to wardship, begging and dependence on relatives or the state, and has allowed them to live in dignity and support their families during tough times. Despite the challenges ahead, the cooperative continues its work through the wonders of touch.

Minefields in development

As long as there is ground rendered useless [by landmines], and more importantly, as long as there are people perceived as useless, there can be no recovery, no development, and no peace. — Queen Noor of Jordan

According to the Landmine Survivors' Network, every 22 minutes someone steps on a mine. Eighty percent of these casualties are civilians — men, women and children. Salvadorans injured, maimed, scarred or otherwise handicapped by landmines and other instruments of war number tens of thousands. Promotora de la Organización de Discapacitados de El Salvador (PODES) was launched in 1985. Following the 1992 peace accords, PODES legally organized as an association of the disabled for the disabled from

both sides of the Salvadoran civil war. PODES, which in some Spanish dialects means "you can," has lived up to its name and its philosophy of empowering the handicapped, rehabilitating them and incorporating them into everyday life.

Between 1994 and 1998 PODES received $115,700 from the IAF, which allowed it to expand into a nation-wide system serving the entire Salvadoran amputee population through regional workshops and a mobile unit to provide, fit, maintain and repair prosthetic devices and parts. Additionally, PODES trained disabled individuals to work in its shops as prosthetic specialists and technicians. By 1998, PODES' clientele totaled 950 individuals, nearly double the 500 beneficiaries anticipated in 1994. Four years after the grant period ended, another 850 individuals had benefited. Of PODES' 16 disabled employees, six are in its prosthetics workshop in San Salvador.

These dedicated technicians have developed ingenious methods of crafting prosthetics from indigenous woods and metals. In 1996 PODES was ranked by the World Rehabilitation Fund as El Salvador's best manufacturer of orthopedic devices. While not as life-like as the imported prosthetics on which they are modeled, PODES' "native devices," are just as functional and cost far less. An imported prosthetic device should last five years, but most of PODES' clients perform intensive physical labor in industry and agriculture and could require a replacement every two or three years. "Native devices" have proved more durable under their strenuous work conditions, PODES' technicians proudly boast. While their native prosthetics lack defined toes, heels and fingers, I was unable to tell which workshop employees were amputees. Shoes, pant legs or sleeves covered the prosthetics they had crafted for themselves, and only an occasional limp revealed the injuries they had overcome.

PODES' many successes include its successful negotiation of an agreement between El Salvador's Health and Education ministries creating an orthopedic technician college degree. Two PODES' members were trained at the university level. Further coordination resulted in a collaborative effort by the Health, Education and Social Security ministries to provide space for PODES' services at these institutions. The organization was also active in the passage of legislation protecting the rights of disabled veterans. A sterling reputation has allowed PODES to leverage resources from donors that include MEDICO International, Vietnam Veterans of America and Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ), the German government's development agency.

Yet PODES faces many obstacles. The focus on services means the institution is especially dependent on donations and the looming possibility of donor fatigue has given rise to cost-cutting and financing strategies. The manufacture of "native devices" brought PODES a step closer to sustainability as has its reduced dependency on imports — from 90 percent of its production components at the start of IAF's funding to 40 percent now. PODES was invited by Nicaraguan associations of disabled veterans to demonstrate this cost reduction model. The organization has established a sliding payment scale and obtained government subsidies from the Fondo para la Protección de Lisiados (Fund for the Protection of the Disabled) and other funding sources so that low-income amputees can afford its prosthetic devices. But, perhaps the greatest challenge for PODES lies with its own clientele. Many have missed payments because of a perception that disability, poverty and veteran status entitle them to charity. The organization has launched an awareness drive stressing the importance of its beneficiaries' contributions to the sustainability of the program. With their support, PODES can continue to help El Salvador recover from war.

Voices of the disabled

Addressing disability is a significant part of reducing poverty. Bringing disabled people out of the corners and back alleys of society, and empowering them to thrive in the bustling center of national life, will do much to improve the lives of many from among the poorest of the poor around the world. — James Wolfenson

The two Salvadoran projects described argue strongly for supporting efforts for the disabled by the disabled. However, integration into the social and economic mainstream should also be a priority. IAF grantees have, as a matter of course, brought individuals with disabilities into their activities. Given the socio-economic conditions of the beneficiary population, and

the inclusive traits that distinguish IAF grantees, this participation had been assumed. In the past, however, only anecdotal evidence confirmed their inclusion in projects that did not specifically target the disabled. A close look at several IAF grants in El Salvador tested the assumption and produced some effective examples of inclusiveness:

REDES

Fundación Salvadoreña para la Reconstrucción y el Desarrollo (REDES) is a grassroots support organization that provides training and technical assistance in marketing and business administration. In 2001, REDES received a $345,987 grant from the IAF for its Market on Wheels in San Salvador's municipality of Mejicanos, where the market operates in several neighborhoods, improving the sales of street vendors. Currently REDES' 46 direct beneficiaries include two disabled individuals who are receiving training and credit for enterprise development and four disabled veterans on REDES' staff. Additionally, 10 disabled individuals receive support from other REDES' projects. After a recent IAF grantee workshop, REDES also began negotiations with ACOPASANTAL to purchase and distribute its products at the market. If successful, the commercial outlet will provide ACOPASANTAL's visually impaired members with an additional source of income.

ADEMISS

Agencia de Desarrollo Microregional para los municipios de Ilopango, Soyapango y San Martín (ADEMISS) is a regional grassroots development agency that promotes and supports local development in the micro-region composed of the municipalities of Ilopango, Soyapango and San Martín. In 2001, ADEMISS received $275,600 from the IAF to organize five communities around Lake Ilopango into fishing cooperatives, develop the infrastructure to raise fish in floating cages and provide the fishermen with technical assistance in production and marketing.

In San Antonio, a community served by this project, Nelson Peña, a young man with a motor disability, has received credit and training and he tends the project's fish cages. His mother is also a beneficiary. Nelson not only works hard on the project, but he also assists his father in the field and around the

SEAN SPRAQUE

Nelson Peña participates in ADEMISS´ fish farming project.

house. By April 2003, San Antonio had already surpassed its neighbors by floating a sixth cage, when the original proposal called for only five. Obviously the disabled comrade did not hinder progress. Reflecting on Peña's participation, ADEMISS representatives observed that he might be the only disabled fisherman in the communities served. They will, however, investigate further so no one is left behind.

Moving forward

Disabled persons are entitled to have their special needs taken into consideration at all stages of economic and social planning. — United Nations, Declaration on the Rights of Disabled Persons

The experiences shared by those who attended the World Bank's conference on disability and development led me to IAF's history with the disabled. While the record is modest, it is also rich in replicable examples that show that people with disabilities can take control of their own development. Following the conference, I was among the representatives from the IAF at the United Nations' Second Ad Hoc Committee on Disability, described in the box to this article. This venue allowed us to meet disability activists from the entire hemisphere, show our solidarity with their self-help goals and encourage them to apply for grants. Having looked back, we may now move forward and continue to respond to, not guide, disabled people's initiatives to change their lives.

Eduardo Rodríguez-Frías is an IAF program staff assistant.

UN Committee Boosts Disability Rights

The Second Ad Hoc Committee on Disability met June 16-27, 2003, at the United Nations headquarters in New York to discuss an eventual international convention on the rights of the disabled, a recommendation first advanced in 1987 by the Global Meeting of Experts to Review the Implementation of the World Programme of Action Concerning Disabled People. As a result, a consensus, endorsed by many NGOs, member states and UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, supports a convention.

In theory, international human rights laws, as well as the United Nations charter, extend protection to the disabled. Most UN conventions refer indirectly to the rights of people with disability, although only the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child contains explicit language. Nonetheless disabled people all over the world remain, because of their disabilities, disproportionately the victims of such outrages as malnutrition, forced sterilization, involuntary institutionalization and sexual exploitation, and they are routinely denied educational opportunities, basic public services and voting rights. This reality motivated many who work on disability issues to call for a conference that would, in the words of Jan Kavan, who presided at the 57th Session of the UN General Assembly, "ensure that people with disabilities are not treated as problems that must be dealt with, but as human agents with a right to full participation on the basis of equality, in all spheres of social life and development."

In contrast to the previous Ad Hoc Committee, which counted representation from only 40 countries, most UN member states were represented on the committee convened in June, and more than 20 delegations in attendance included a disabled person. Representatives from NGO's from all over the globe voiced their opinion. Delegations from the European Community and Mexico vigorously took the lead in advocating for the convention. While the European Community wanted to base the substance of the convention on recommendations from a study to be conducted, the Mexicans considered existing research an adequate basis for a legally binding document and further study a waste of time and money.

After a very intense two weeks, a resolution passed providing for a Third Ad Hoc Committee to compile the agenda for the First International Conference on the Human Rights of People with Disability. The resolution also provides for a Special Committee that would create a Working Group, composed of representatives from 27 countries and 12 NGOs from various regions, to prepare the draft for the Ad-Hoc Committee's consideration. The International Conference on the Human Rights of People with Disability should represent a major breakthrough for the disabled community and their advocates. Once a convention is adopted by the UN General Assembly, each member state is at least theoretically obligated to enforce it. However, the time table is hard to predict. Before any agreement can be reached, critical issues must be resolved: the definition of disability, programs to be available to the disabled and the degree of flexibility allowed, especially in developing countries where most of the disabled live.

There is a long way to go, but the 2003 Ad Hoc Committee was a big step forward for disabled people. Both the resolution passed and the broad representation indicate a firmer commitment to their rights and dignity. — *Oscar Ruiz, IAF program staff assistant*

More Abilities

In addition to those featured in "Developmental Abilities," other IAF-supported projects have addressed prevention or allowed individuals with disabilities to actively engage in self-help.

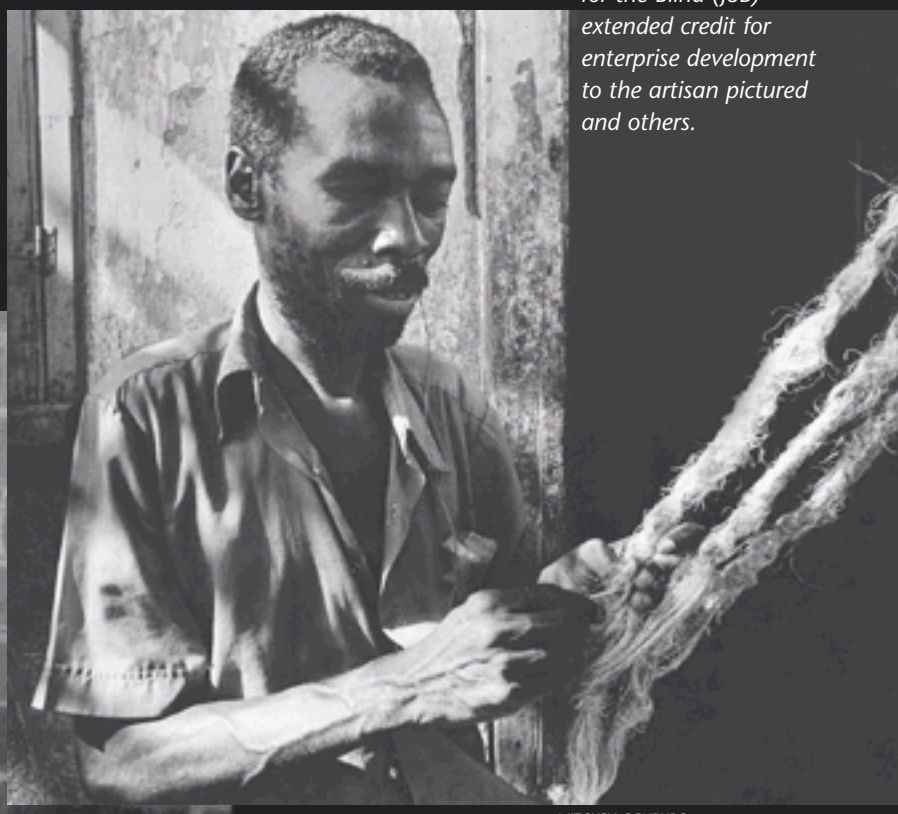
MIGUEL SAYAGO

Project director Alfredo Torro leads a meeting at the Fundación de Sordos Adultos "Fray Luis Ponce de León" (FSA) which used its 1983 IAF grant of $69,300 to codify Ecuador's sign language, conduct awareness campaigns and develop training for its members.

FAITH MITCHELL

A three-year grant of $117,704 to the Eye Care Haiti Ophthalmic Assistant Program (ECHOAP) in 1981 helped train rural para-professional ophthalmologists to identify, treat and prevent eye maladies in rural Haiti where untreated conjunctivitis, glaucoma and cataracts are among the leading causes of blindness. Parents and grandparents receiving eye care are encouraged to bring children to the clinic for screenings.

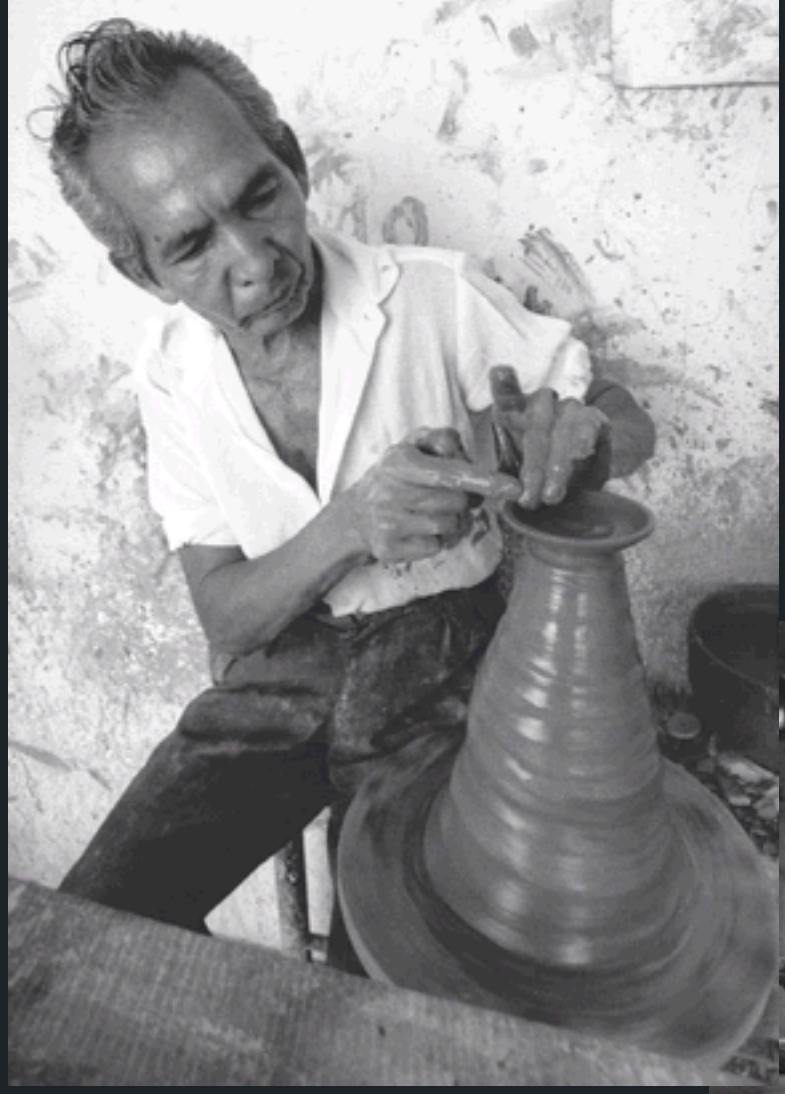
With a $15,000 grant over two years awarded in 1981, Jamaica for the Blind (JSB) extended credit for enterprise development to the artisan pictured and others.



MITCHELL DENBURG

SEAN SPRAGUE

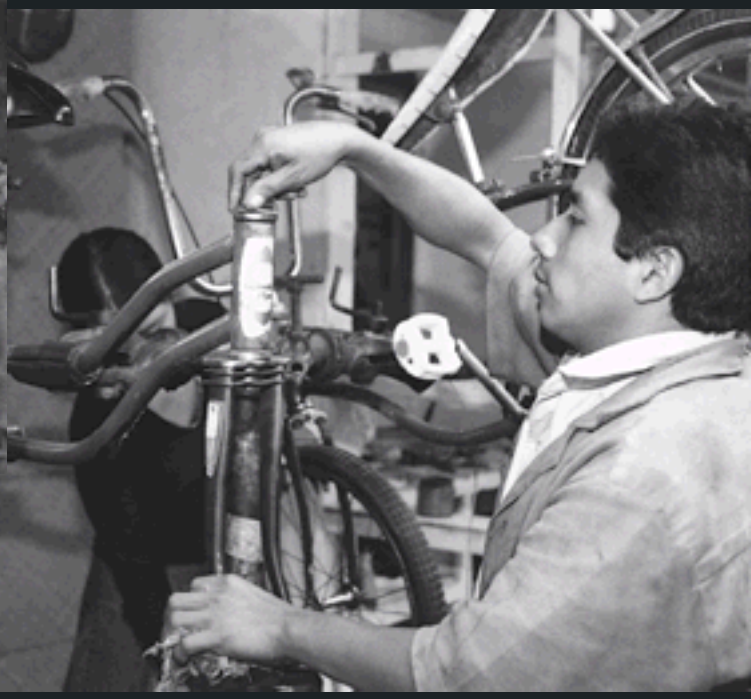
In 1987, Asociación Pro-Hogar Permanente de Parálisis Cerebral (APC) was awarded a five-year grant of $241,310 to develop a facility employing 45 individuals and providing vocational training to another 70. At the time, APC was the only independent living facility for the cerebral palsied in El Salvador.



SEAN SPRAGUE

A three-year grant of $61,080 to La Asociación Cooperativa de Grupo Independiente Pro Rehabilitación Integral (ACOGIPRI) supported the expansion of Shicali Cerámica, a studio in San Salvador, El Salvador, that employs Salvadorans with disabilities and exports ceramics to the United States.

PATRICK BRESLIN



A workshop set up by Centro Salvadoreño de Tecnología Apropiada (CESTA) with $316,980 from the IAF, disbursed between 1988 and 1992, employs disabled Salvadorans to repair and assemble bicycles.

MIGUEL SAYAGO

In 1989, Fundación Granja Taller de Asistencia Colombiana (FUNGRATA) received $182,850 in IAF support to help rehabilitate the mentally ill in Bogotá, Colombia. FUNGRATA provides a therapeutic and supportive environment, employing many of its clients in its laundry, bakery and other shops. Medically diagnosed individuals qualify for the program if they can show they are homeless or indigent and willing to participate. In contrast to state institutions, treatment at FUNGRATA is not mandatory and patients are free to leave.

Well before the development profession became aware of the volume of cash sent from migrants to their home communities, Sandra Nichols noticed a flow of ideas and equipment into the rural Mexican community where she was living, and she decided to explore it. Nichols, who describes herself as "a good nosy anthropologist type," has a doctorate in geography and is currently a research analyst with the California Institute for Rural Studies. She began her inquiry by "hanging out and asking questions" and soon discovered a pattern that had serious implications for sustainable farming.

As part of an IAF's effort to learn more about transnational community development, our task force on transnationalism invited Nichols to our Arlington offices to share her truly original research on transfers of agricultural technology to Mexican farms from California orchards and vineyards by farm workers who live on both sides of the border. After the session, we asked to publish the findings she had originally presented at the Cuarto Congreso of the Asociación Mexicana de Estudios Rurales in Morelia, Michoacán, Mexico, June 20-23, 2003. This third article in our forum series is the first to explore nonmonetary remittances. We welcome submissions on related topics for consideration for future issues of *Grassroots Development*.

Technology Transfer through Mexican Migration

By Sandra Nichols *All photos: Sandra Nichols*

Technological advances flow over the border with farm workers returning home.

The Inter-American Development Bank estimates that Mexican migrants working in the United States sent home more than $10.5 billion in 2002, representing one of Mexico's largest sources of foreign exchange. The figure for 2003 is expected to rise to 14.5 billion. The magnitude of this monetary flow — less than revenue from oil and direct foreign investment, but rivaling tourism and manufacturing export revenues — has prompted interest and debate among economists, scholars, politicians and policy-makers on the role of these remittances, the efficiency of the transfers and their potential for leveraging development.

The focus on *monetary* remittances, however, has meant that other types of return flows are often overlooked. This article defines remittances to include nonmonetary flows as well, specifically the transfer of new ideas and technologies, and examines the impact of migrant-driven technology transfers from California to the Mexican state of Zacatecas between the early 1950s and 2002. Closer attention to such transfers, and their impact, can reveal opportunities for strengthening migrant-driven development, while underscoring, in the case of agricultural technology, the need to ensure environmental appropriateness and economic sustainability.

The Jerez Valley

Zacatecas' Jerez Valley is located in the Sierra Madre Occidental and its streams and rivers drain westward to the Pacific Ocean. The elevated inland location (at 2,000 meters, or 6,650 feet, above sea level) and the intervening topography make for a semi-arid climate; annual rainfall ranges between 316 mm. to 864 mm. and is concentrated between June and October. Most agriculture is rainfed, with less than 20 percent of arable land under irrigation. Until the 1970s, agriculture was primarily household-based, for both subsistence and market purposes. Corn and beans in the summer, and wheat and fodder in the winter, were complemented by fruits, vegetables, meat, milk and eggs. In the 1980s and 1990s this traditional diversity was replaced by a monoculture: high-value fruit, which farmers hoped would end their dependence on non-farm employment.

Low prices for agricultural products, unreliable rainfall and periodic drought have made off-farm employment a feature of farm life in this region since at least the 19th century. Initially men left their fields for the mines, the railroads and the haciendas; more recent migrants opt for seasonal work on U.S farms. The mechanism that set this cross-border process in motion was a series of formal labor agreements, popularly known as the Bracero Program, between the U.S. and Mexican governments between 1942 and 1964. In time, migrants from Jerez who had become familiar with U.S. job markets opened the way for relatives, friends and neighbors, spurring the transnational flow of people and money, as well as goods, ideas and technologies. By the 1980s the *municipio* of Jerez had one of Mexico's highest rates of out-migration, and many villages became identified with the U.S. towns and cities where migrants had gained a foothold. While some migrants chose to settle in the U.S., others have continued their circular route, maintaining households in Jerez and subsidizing and modernizing their farms with money, ideas and innovations from the U.S.

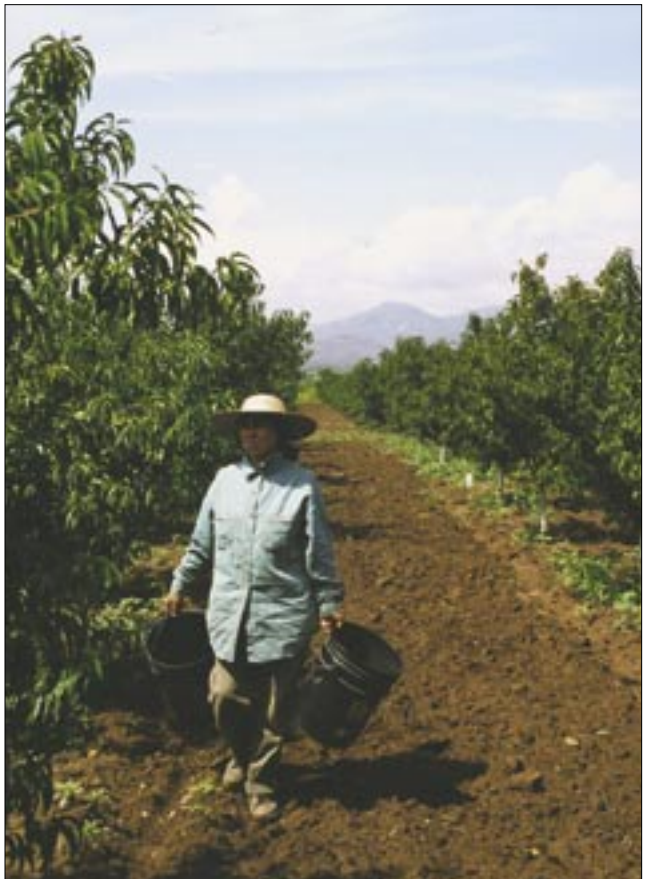
Peach fever

In the 1970s, as out-migration gained momentum, small farm systems began shifting toward commercial peach production. By the 1980s, growing numbers of small farmers replaced their corn and bean fields with orchards, often financing the investment with their U.S. earnings. Within a few years a peach boom was underway. Whereas Jerez had virtually no commercial orchards in the 1950s, by 1978 approximately 1,800 hectares had been planted in peaches; 15 years later, the area had grown six-fold to 13,000 hectares. This expansion became known locally as *la fiebre del durazno*, "peach fever." In less than two decades peaches transformed the valley's agricultural landscape and accounted for half the value of all agricultural production in the *municipio*. Why?

El loco Valdez

Jesús Saldívar Valdez is widely credited as the first farmer to plant peaches on a commercial scale in the *municipio*. Valdez had worked in California on numerous occasions and, according to one account, he returned with peach seedlings and knowledge of how to raise them. Valdez himself tells a different, more nuanced story of inventiveness, risk-taking and perseverance. To begin with, he claims he never worked in California's peach orchards nor did he bring back peach plant material or even the knowledge of peach cultivation.

Below and opposite, bearing peach orchards in Jerez in 1999.



Spanish priests had brought the first peaches (*prunus persica*) to the New World where cultivation was confined to haciendas and missions because the prized fruit was so difficult to grow. Jerez became famous for a small, firm and very sweet cling peach known as *criollo*. Farmers produced moderate quantities in the 1890s, but the Mexican Revolution of 1910-1920 and the subsequent land reform program disrupted agriculture, and recovery was slow. By the 1950s many families had just a few peach trees adjacent to their fields or mixed among other trees in family gardens. A few farmers with more trees sold their surplus to buyers from Mexico City.

What Jesús Valdez brought back to Jerez was the key to making *criollo* peaches a profitable crop. In the early 1950s Valdez decided to plant the unheard-of number of 1500 peach seedlings. For this he became the target of such ridicule that he resorted to transporting his seedlings from the nursery to his orchard by burro under cover of darkness. These efforts at secrecy notwithstanding, his neighbors dubbed him *el loco Valdez*, and for the first eight years he did indeed appear to be engaged in a quixotic venture as spring freezes destroyed the buds and his trees failed to produce a crop. Valdez would travel to California to support his family and pay off the debt incurred from planting peaches. Working in the citrus groves, he saw something he believed could be the answer to his problem: smudge pots. If American farmers could protect their oranges and lemons from frost by heating the air, he reasoned, it might also work for his peaches back home. Using discarded two-liter metals cans, he improvised small heaters fueled with spent engine oil. When frost threatened his orchard, his sons and hired laborers helped keep the makeshift heaters going through the night. After a couple of years, he got it right and produced a crop. Fruit dealers in the area to purchase apples were happy to buy his peach harvest, and with the proceeds Valdez paid off all his debts and bought himself a truck. With his profits the following year, he purchased an even larger truck and a tractor and built a new house. That was in the early 1960s and his neighbors were so impressed that they began addressing him as Don Jesús.

Peach boom

Many of the same neighbors who had ridiculed Valdez quickly set about gathering all the discarded peaches they could find and planting the pits. Valdez acquired several thousand second-hand smudge pots from the U.S. both for himself and for resale. Profits fueled peach fever, and some farmers set up nurseries to meet the demand for peach seedlings, accelerating the rate at which migrants with money to invest could plant orchards of their own. The increased production drew buyers from the major wholesale markets in Mexico City and Guadalajara.

With orchards averaging between two and 10 hectares, many farmers now had a significant source of income, and some chose to forgo migration in favor of tending their orchards. While average yields were fairly low, overall production in the municipality was such that Jerez became Mexico's leading peach-producing region, and cultivation of the local *criollo* variety spread within the state of Zacatecas and beyond. The boom prompted the Mexican government to fund research projects, technical assistance and credit programs, and it established several producer cooperatives with financing from the World Bank. By 1993 a third of the municipality's agricultural land was in

peaches and the crop accounted for 52 percent of the municipality's agricultural production.

It was a classic case of transfer and diffusion of innovation: Valdez returned from the U.S. with a technological solution to a problem; once his efforts proved successful his skeptical neighbors, won over by his example, copied him and became early adapters. Their success led to wider application in the 1970s and 1980s until, by the early 1990s, a majority of farmers had planted at least a portion of their land in peaches. A peach orchard became an attractive investment, offering a viable alternative to departure. For migrants already settled in the U.S., it produced an income stream for relatives back home. Some looked forward to an orchard as a retirement activity after years of migrating. Migrants working in California fruit orchards and vineyards soon discovered additional technologies and practices that could be applied in Mexico. Many learned pruning and irrigation techniques and taught them to others. And when the need arose, they turned to pesticides, fungicides and commercial fertilizers. But how sustainable would this new style of agriculture prove for Jerez over time?

Peach bust

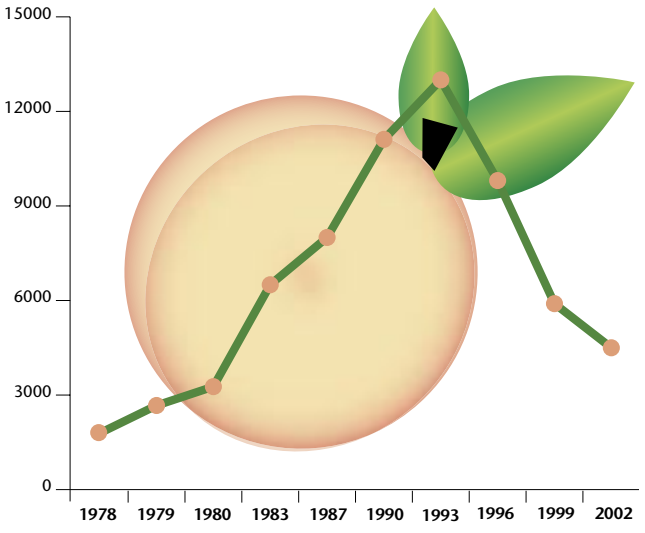
By the mid-1990s Jerez became a patchwork of dead and abandoned orchards, and the government agricultural office began offering farmers subsidies to pull out their old trees. By 2002, the area in planted peaches shrank to 4,500 hectares. The explanation for the collapse lies in a convergence of environmental and economic factors. Lack of rainfall, low prices and rising costs of production drove many farmers to abandon their orchards and migrate. That this happened so quickly and that the farmers had so little resilience bears closer scrutiny.

The landscape of small farms had become a vast monoculture, comparable to the high-input, industrial-style orchards of California. With so much contiguous land in the same crop, the region was ripe for pest infestations (from spider mites and the peach twig borer) and diseases (such as brown rot, peach leaf curl and shot hole) which spread quickly. Agro-chemicals to control pests, often applied too late and in overly concentrated doses, damaged trees and reduced the population of beneficial insects that help keep the pest population in check.

Additionally, the "bare floor" — common to California orchards and vineyards until quite recently — contributed to a deterioration of the environment. This was produced through regular use of a tractor-drawn disk to keep the alleys free of vegetation and had several adverse effects: It left the soil vulnerable to wind and water erosion; it eliminated habitat for beneficial insects; and the dry, dusty orchards created a favorable setting for one of the most prevalent pests, spider mites. In time, frequent tractor passes compacted the soil and reduced its capacity to absorb and maintain moisture. Both intense tractor cultivation and pesticides involved the purchase of inputs, especially fuel and agro-chemicals, which the collapse of the Mexican peso in 1994 put beyond the reach of many farmers. With no alternative, they abandoned their orchards and went back to work in the U.S. Dead and dying orchards became additional sources of disease and pest infestation, posing further problems for neighboring farmers trying to maintain healthy orchards.

Added to these problems was a factor beyond anyone's control: the weather. A periodic cycle of reduced rainfall, a feature of semi-arid environments, began in the mid-1990s, further exacerbating already stressed

JEREZ, Zacatecas: Hectares in peaches, 1978-2002



Sources: Chan (1988); Departamento Agropecuario, Jerez; INEGI (1994, 1998); Ruiz Lujan et. al. (1993); Salvador Rodriguez Barrientos, Jefe del Distrito de Sagarpa (2002).

Dead and abandoned peach orchard, Jerez, 1999.

conditions. Yields declined and many orchards simply withered. Even those within the government-built irrigation district began to feel the effects. The reservoir level fell so low that by the summer of 2000 severe water rationing was in place and many farmers were faced with the prospect of loosing their orchards altogether.

The search for alternatives

Yet in spite of the drought and setbacks, a committed core would not give up. Just as Jesús Valdéz had seen a possible solution to his frost problem in Southern California's citrus groves of the 1950s, farmers from the small community of Los Haro found more efficient ways to use water in the vineyards of Napa Valley four decades later. Los Haro, a major peach-producing locality within the Jerez *municipio*, also has one of the area's highest migration rates. Its population of fewer than 900 doubles when migrants return for

Samuel Félix in 2000 next to the valves, above, and, a drip line, left, of the system irrigating the Napa, California, vineyard where he works. Applying this technology to his orchard in Los Haro, Félix installed the most sophisticated drip irrigation system in Mexico.

the annual fiesta and winter vacations. For nearly 50 years men, women and entire families from Los Haro have found work in Napa Valley's vineyards, wineries and tourist industry. While many have now settled in Napa, a significant number have invested their U.S. earnings in peach orchards in Los Haro.

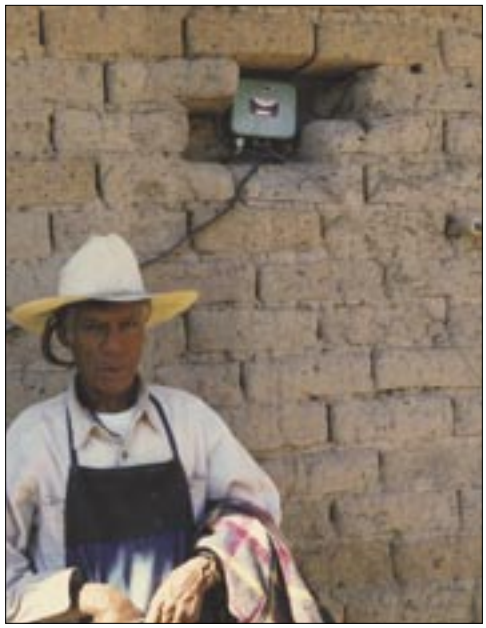
Given the value of the Napa Valley's vineyards, the agricultural technologies in use there are some of the most advanced in the world. Now, thanks to technology transfer, Mexico's most sophisticated water-conserving, drip irrigation system is located on 10 hectares of peach orchard in Los Haro. The enterprising migrant was Samuel Félix, who installed the system in 2000, modeling it on one he had helped lay out in the Napa vineyard where he has been employed for more than a decade. He spent close to $30,000, using valves imported from Israel and high quality tubing and emitters purchased from Napa suppliers. Word spread about his new irrigation system, and visitors, including engineers from Mexico City and the governor of Zacatecas, have come to have a look. By early 2001 at least five more farmers in Los Haro had installed drip systems financed with their U.S. earnings.

José Luis Acevedo (left) and a visiting farmer watch a wind machine installed to control frost in a peach orchard in Jerez.

Other technology transfers

Damaging frosts continue to threaten the peach crop, but many farmers have abandoned heaters because of fuel costs and the municipality's concern with pollution. Some farmers now try to plant orchards in higher, less frost-prone locations and hope that a freeze will not hit during the critical flowering and bud-break period. To protect their crop, U.S. growers now use wind machines that mix the lower lying cold air with the warmer air just above it, raising the temperature the few degrees necessary. At least one peach grower in Jerez, José Luis Acevedo, saw the wind machines operating in orchards in California and became determined to acquire one. Eventually he purchased a second-hand machine in Arizona, and in 1999 he installed it in his peach orchard.

The phenomenon of technology transfer by migrants is not confined to Jerez. In the guava-producing region of Jalpa, Zacatecas, about 180 kilometers south, wind machines have been in use for more than 12 years. Vidal Valenzuela was the first farmer to install one after seeing fruit protected from frost in orchards near Marysville, California. He too bought his second-hand and when he confirmed that it could save his guava crop, he had others manufactured locally in order to expand the area he could protect. In 1999 Valenzuela began looking into a system with a thermostat to switch on the engine automatically when temperatures dropped to dangerous levels, so he wouldn't have to rise in the middle of the night to turn the machines on manually. His success has drawn agricultural engineers from elsewhere in the state to visit and learn from him.



Dimas Hurtado with the control box for his electric fence in Los Haro.

Javier Félix with field equipment from Napa.

A more recent and dramatic example of technology transfer is the spraying rig that Javier Félix uses in his peach orchard in Los Haro. While working in another Napa vineyard, his brother, Samuel Félix, came across a sophisticated sprayer with multiple nozzles placed high and low, enabling the spray to reach both the top and underside of the plant foliage and to spray two rows at a time. Samuel took the design, not the equipment, back to Zacatecas where a local machine shop built a sprayer to his specifications. Javier, who

manages the family's orchards, finds the new rig faster, more effective and safer than the old system of spraying the trees by hand. Nor is the transfer of technology limited only to fruit orchards. While working on a dairy farm in California, another farmer saw electric fences used for corralling cattle and installed one in Jerez. Strung along the top of a wall, an electric fence now protects his poultry from marauding raccoons; in a nearby pasture he rigged the fence to allow for rotation of his cattle around different sections for maximum productivity. Other farmers have acquired weed eaters, roto-tillers and small field transporters. These ongoing, migrant-driven transfers from California to Mexico point to a determination to make agriculture work and a relentless search for solutions.

Sustainable development?

Farmer-migrants go to considerable expense to adapt technology observed in the U.S. agriculture, but how effective is the investment? As illustrated by the peach boom and bust, practices imported from a high-input, industrial form of agriculture can have adverse consequences for the environment and the health of humans and animals, and they can dramatically reduce a small farmer's margin of profit. Yet it is modern industrial agriculture that migrants encounter as farm workers in the United States. Furthermore this style of agriculture is currently promoted by most Mexican agronomists and agro-chemical sales representatives.

Are initiatives to catalyze development in migrant-sending regions doomed to fail? Or might there be a way to increase the likelihood that migrants can make their farms more profitable through technology transfer? What if innovative farmer-migrants encountered effective examples of profitable, low-input agricultural systems? Might they then transfer more environmentally sustainable technologies and practices back to Mexico? And, as when Jesús Valdéz introduced smudge pots, might a new wave of technology transfers stimulate the shift to a new kind of agriculture, this time one that is sound both ecologically and financially?

Interviews and conversations with Mexican farmers and farm workers in both Mexico and California suggest that sustainable agricultural practices are not foreign concepts. Indeed, the nonchemical, diversified approach is familiar to many who learned this style of farming from their fathers and grandfathers. However, in recent decades it has been derided as primitive and old-fashioned by extension agents and agricultural experts. If migrants were to see successful examples of sustainable agriculture in the U.S., and if they were to engage in farmer-to-farmer dialog with organic farmers, might they regain respect for locally-adapted, low-input systems?

After several years of exposure to sustainable agricultural practices in the Napa vineyard where he works, Samuel Félix is eager to try a more sustainable approach on the 10 hectares (25 acres) he and his brother farm in Mexico. To afford the improvements, Javier Félix remains in Los Haro looking after the peach orchards while Samuel spends close to 10 months a year working in Napa. Over time he has witnessed remarkable changes in the vineyards as the owners have introduced practices aimed at reducing their dependence on agro-chemicals and transitioning toward environmentally sustainable farming. These include a no-till approach for their hillside vineyards, drip irrigation to conserve water and cover crops to reduce erosion, increase organic matter in the soil, improve moisture retention and provide a habitat for beneficial insects. Félix has seen first-hand how this controls pests without pesticides and produces higher quality wine grapes.

In the summer of 2000 Félix's supervisor sent him to the Napa Sustainable Winegrowing Group's first-ever workshop in Spanish for vineyard workers. The discussion focused on the benefits of managing vineyards agro-ecologically, in a manner that strives to imitate nature instead of to replace it with a chemically-dependant system. The philosophy resonated with Félix who had learned to farm from his father. Without prompting, Félix and the other Mexican vineyard workers attending the workshop volunteered that the agro-ecological approach was essential to passing their land to their children. They believed it could even increase farm profits by reducing costs. Other farm workers in attendance were simply relieved not to be further exposed to toxic chemicals. Sustainable agriculture was not a hard sell with this group.

Javier Félix inspecting the cover crop he recently planted in Los Haro at the urging of his brother in California.

Félix stays in touch with his brother via regular telephone conversations, sharing with him the approaches used in the Napa vineyard. However, what works for grapes may not necessarily apply directly to peaches, so in the summer of 2002 Félix took advantage of a chance to visit Woodleaf Farm, an organic peach orchard in Northern California. Woodleaf's owner, Carl Rosato, underscored the importance of cover crops to eliminate tillage, help maintain soil health, reduce weeds and attract beneficial insects. The following year, in the summer of 2003, Samuel urged his brother to plant clover as a trial cover crop in a section of their orchard When Samuel learned a few weeks later that the seed had germinated, he was enthusiastic about the process he had set in motion. Their soil may be poor, he explained, but it was "grateful"; planting clover was like giving a gift to the soil, and the soil was encouraged to "give back." The experiment on a very small scale represented the first time anyone had planted a cover crop in the region.

While the Félix brothers are obviously enterprising and innovative, their changes are halting and somewhat haphazard. Sustainable agriculture, like an ecosystem, is very much interconnected. Samuel acknowledges that he's groping in the dark, and in his spare time he searches for reliable information in Spanish that will help him transition toward a sustainable, agro-ecological system. His goal is clear: to make farming in Jerez profitable enough so that he doesn't have to work in California. Samuel Félix's vision extends beyond growing peaches to launching a fruit-processing operation and working with others to grow and market pesticide-free fruit. Should his ideas catch on, and should he find markets, perhaps Félix will become the Jesús Valdez of sustainable agriculture, catalyzing the diffusion of a new kind of agriculture that revives a rural area plagued by abandonment and out-migration. But for now he works in Napa, looking forward to the day when he can move back to Jerez permanently.

Conclusion

The transfer of agricultural technology has been largely overlooked in the literature on migrant remittances and on migration and development. In the Jerez region of Zacatecas, Mexico, technology transfers by migrants working in U.S. agriculture have played a central role in the transformation of local agriculture and of the regional economy. However, the choice of technologies and practices transferred has been limited to what migrants have personally encountered in the course of their work, resulting in a bias toward the practices of high-input industrial agriculture. Over time, adverse environmental impacts and the high cost of inputs associated with industrial agriculture helped undermine the migrants' investment in their peach orchards in Jerez and contributed to a dramatic decline in peach cultivation and production as well as in regional income. A new generation of innovation-minded farmer-migrants is now attempting to revive peach production in the region with new transfers from the vineyards and orchards of Northern California.

The examples of technology transfers discussed here focus on Zacatecas. More research is still needed to determine how widespread migrant transfers of agricultural technology actually are: Is the phenomenon present in migration circuits elsewhere? What is being transferred? What is the context within which transfer, adoption and diffusion take place? What conditions favor transfer and what are the facilitating mechanisms? What are the impacts of these transfers on the social, economic and environmental systems of the migrants' home community? Finally, with regard to the potential of remittances to catalyze hometown development, what kind of support and technical assistance is needed to ensure that the transfers indeed result in sustainable development?

Grassroots Development on the Border

By Mark Caicedo *All photos: Mark Caicedo*

As the United States and Mexico grapple with the challenges of proximity, including migration, jobs, environmental degradation and security, the Inter-American Foundation and its NGO partners are spearheading efforts to address these and other issues with a string of grassroots development projects in the burgeoning communities along the border. This is an area of stunning demographics. In Ciudad Juárez, across from El Paso, Texas, for example, the population has nearly doubled since 1990, from some 800,000 to nearly 1.4 million. The precipitous increase, which is duplicated all along the border, strains the existing infrastructure, threatens the environment and is exhausting the available housing inventory and job opportunities.

The IAF is a leading donor to Mexican development organizations along the border. *Grassroots Development* of 2003 profiled the U.S.-Mexico Border Philanthropy Partnership, a coalition of nine national and regional foundations and 20 community foundations, that has made $20 million available to fight poverty on both sides of the border. The IAF is a founding member of the Partnership and has committed $3 million over three years. In addition, the IAF currently supports 29 Mexican grantees with nearly $9 million. Of this amount, more than $2 million was awarded to six grantees for projects along the U.S.-Mexico border. Two other organizations recently completed border projects funded by the IAF. *Grassroots Development* recently visited three of the IAF's active border grantees.

Stylist Yadira Hernández cuts Javier Figueroa's hair in Yolanda Ramírez' barbershop, a participant in FECHAC's small-business loan program in Ciudad Juárez.

Micro-enterprise ventures benefiting from FECHAC's IAF grant include the small diner serving comida típica *that Julia Neri, left, runs out of her home assisted by Mirian Graciela Guiñada.*

FECHAC has extended a small-business loan to Francisca Rodríguez Villa, owner and operator of a home-based general store in Colonia Galeana, Ciudad Juárez.

Ana Infante, a loan officer based in FUNHAVI's main office, helps a family complete an application for a home improvement loan.

A PROVAY housing project in Estación Corrales, Ciudad Obregón, mainly benefits women, including Lizabeth Isabel Caravelo Valenzuela, an indigenous Yaqui and new homeowner.

In Ciudad Obregón, Sonora (bordering Arizona), the Comité de Promoción Social del Valle del Yaqui (PROVAY) works in collaboration with the municipality of Cajeme, Fundación del Empresariado Sonorense and the Fundación de Apoyo Infantil Sonora, to help women heads-of-household build safe and durable homes. The project uses locally available, renewable natural resources in construction, thus incorporating an environmental component into its project. Fundación Hábitat y Vivienda (FUNHAVI) in Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua, a scant half mile from El Paso, Texas, is collaborating with the business sector to mobilize more than $165,000 toward a loan fund for home improvements, including connection to municipal water delivery and sewage systems. FUNHAVI encourages full participation by its borrowers, expecting them to complete paperwork themselves, participate in designing building plans and oversee construction. Repayments are processed at a local supermarket chain, a partner named, appropriately enough, SMART. Fundación del Empresario Chihuahuense A.C. (FECHAC) counters the exploding population's impact on Chihuahua's economy by "developing one entrepreneur at a time." Initially funded with a self-imposed tax on leading businesses, FECHAC has used its IAF grant toward creating community banks throughout the state and extending small loans to more than 1,000 micro-entrepreneurs, mainly women, who also receive training and technical assistance to help their diners, barber shops, general stores and other ventures succeed.

The outcome of these and other border programs clearly hinges on the determination of the beneficiaries and project leaders, who have remained involved since the planning stage, and on their ability to adapt to subtle — or unsubtle — changes that will inevitably occur. Photographs taken on site illustrate some of the progress so far.

Mark Caicedo, a professional photographer, edits photos for IAF's publications.

Carlos Chávez, owner of Ferretería San Carlos, unloads bags of concrete mix. His company and FUNHAVI are partners in an agreement to provide construction materials on credit.

Laborers use locally available materials to make adobe bricks, thereby lowering costs. PROVAY's housing project Campo Cinco, Ciudad Obregón, will have indoor plumbing and electricity.

A rose garden completes the Campo Cinco home Cecilia Valdez built with a loan from PROVAY.

Local Development: An Interview with **David Valenzuela**

By Patrick Breslin and Paula Durbin

Grassroots organizations have been proliferating in Latin America and the Caribbean since the 1960s. Over the last decade, the impressive growth in the numbers of those organizations, and of civil society in general, has coincided with various governmental reforms, including decentralization of some political and economic power from central to regional and municipal governments. The intersection of these processes made possible a powerful new approach to centuries-old problems of poverty: local development.

In countries with long traditions of local self-governance, such as the United States, we take for granted that our county or city, with strong civic and business participation, is responsible for addressing most of our immediate concerns: education, health and sanitation, housing, transportation, jobs, recreation, welfare. Yet in their development strategies major donors have tended to overlook the role of governance at this most basic level. They have often focused on sectors — health, education, housing and other elements of a nation's infrastructure — rather than on the actors who manage the complexities of day-to-day life. Local development is an approach that includes as an indispensable actor in a development project the most fundamental administrative unit of government — the municipality, district, county, canton or parish. It is at this very basic level that possibilities emerge for cooperation and coordination with both civil society organizations and businesses.

In recent years, local development has become a genuine worldwide movement in poor countries. The term appears with increasing frequency in articles and presentations on democracy and poverty reduction. The Inter-American Foundation first began responding to proposals for local development initiatives in the mid-1990s. In 1997, *Grassroots Development* focused on pioneering examples from Ecuador, Brazil, Argentina and Peru. Today, the IAF strives to make local development a cross-cutting theme for most of the projects that it funds. While the IAF does not award grants to local governments, we view our role as bolstering the capacity of citizens and their grassroots organizations to guide, oversee and offer meaningful partnerships to local governments.

Long before he became IAF's president, David Valenzuela was the driving force behind the Foundation's increasing support for grantees that incorporated local government as partners in their development partnerships. Recently, *Grassroots Development* asked Valenzuela to think back over more than a decade of IAF experience in this area and draw out the key lessons.

Is there a necessary pre-requisite for local development?

Local development assumes universal suffrage, the free election of local authorities and a modicum of decentralization and devolution. Latin American and Caribbean countries vary considerably in the level of authority and resources assigned to local governments. However, most now have at least some degree, however minimal, of latitude or capacity to respond to the basic needs of their constituents. The quality of democratic participation and the responsiveness of local authorities to citizen concerns is a critical factor in a positive local development process. Mayors and local authorities who see themselves as enablers and facilitators are far likelier to mobilize their communities in the pursuit of common goals and aspirations.

Unfortunately, a tradition of authoritarianism and a culture of passivity remain difficult obstacles to overcome in the quest for dialogue and cooperation, which are at the heart of local development. Attitudes are gradually changing, nonetheless.

What impact does local development have over the longer term?

Local development is a process and not an end. Local development is an ongoing effort by the organized residents of a locality to identify their problems and aspirations, design and develop strategies to address them, implement these plans and assess the results. Change and renewal are at the heart of successful communities. Today's solutions can become tomorrow's problems, requiring constant efforts to find new ways of addressing citizen concerns. Local development processes are often set in motion by overwhelming circumstances, such as the destruction wreaked by Hurricane Mitch in Central America. However, the social energy that is mobilized to face an emergency can be directed to address other local issues when the emergency has subsided. The local development process amounts to a constant dialogue among residents of a locality — authorities, civic organizations, community groups, business leaders and others — to systematically pursue a better quality of life for all.

Is a sense of place important?

A key to successful local development is a strong sense of identity linked to the land, the heritage, the attractions and the singularity of the locality. Pride in the community and in the locality is an essential building block for both social and economic success. Localities with strong identities are better able to identify what is uniquely theirs and interact more successfully with the external world. The productive base of a locality is often associated with the identity of the inhabitants. The resurgence of traditional weavings in Bolivia as well as of the folk art of other indigenous cultures is not only affirming cultural identity but also serves as an engine for economic growth.

A defined territory with recognized jurisdictional boundaries is also key. Since local governments must play a central role in local development, they must be aware of their physical territory, demographic composition, resources and liabilities. Local development occurs in a territory and involves all the inhabitants. This notion is relatively new in Latin America where municipal governments traditionally only considered the urban populations, ignoring large numbers of rural inhabitants even though most municipalities have legal and administrative responsibility for both. A local development process must consider the full extent of its jurisdiction. Assets and opportunities within the territory can form the basis for job creation and economic growth.

What about communication?

There must be constant dialogue, deliberation and consensus-building. The Spanish word *concertación* best summarizes the process by which multiple parties come together to share concerns and reach a common understanding for action. The collective body of individuals that represent the various stakeholders in a locality is commonly referred to as a *mesa de concertación* in many Latin American countries. That such *concertación* takes place frequently now, and often results in collaborative action, is a significant cultural change. Deep ideological divides traditionally kept business and civil society leaders at odds with each other. Local authorities, until recently designated by central governments, have been accustomed to act on their own without consulting anyone. Building the capacity for *concertación* is essential for successful local development.

Where do grassroots organizations fit in?

Often a grassroots organizing effort is a preliminary step to a local development process. Local development cannot function effectively if the citizens' interests are not represented at the *mesa de concertación*. This holds true particularly for the more vulnerable or isolated residents whose views and concerns are frequently not heard by those in authority. Associations of small producers, trade associations, mothers' clubs, youth groups, neighborhood associations and many other entities form the social base essential to any impact and sustainability of local development. The strengthening of these grassroots organizations' democratic practice and capacity for effective self-help

should accompany a local development process. These organizations will transmit the interests and concerns of citizens without whose support and participation local development efforts become unsustainable or fall short of their goals.

Who should fund local development?
While seed money and external investment may play an important role in local development, the bulk of the resources and effort must come from within the community. Decentralization and devolution have given communities unprecedented access to government funding, however modest, and even the poorest local governments have resources to lend: office space, furniture, vehicles. Local development is a fundamentally endogenous effort that must be sustained by local savings and wealth creation. This fact is borne out by IAF's own experience in providing seed resources to hundreds of local organizations engaged in local development during this past decade. By far the major contributors to these efforts are the local communities. Moreover, local economic development for most poor localities must draw on local resources and comparative advantages and cannot depend on significant amounts of external investment. Job creation should be based on natural advantages or proclivities. A local development process must search deeply to find the human, technological and natural resource base that will become its engine for growth. This does not mean that localities should not do all in their power to attract investments, partners and alliances from near and far to accomplish their goals. The effort, however, must be deeply rooted locally.

What form does the process take?
The best solutions are born within the community and represent the effort of local people to invent or adapt suitable approaches, technologies and procedures. The annals of IAF grantees are replete with stories of local inventions and clever adaptations. Unleashing creative forces not only strengthens local ownership and buy-in, but can also result in higher productivity as well as greater self-worth and local pride. Conversely, development efforts that impose technologies and solutions tend to be less sustainable.

The process of defining and implementing local solutions is an important element in consolidating local development. As mentioned earlier, a *mesa de concertación* is also a forum for assessing results and taking necessary corrective action, if necessary. Communities learn from doing and correcting their own mistakes. Successful local development is sometimes the result of a painful learning process.

How relevant is inclusion?
There must be a deliberate focus on gender equality and consideration for the role and concerns of youth. In traditionally *machista* societies, strong local leadership is needed to ensure that women play an equal role in decision-making and are afforded the same opportunities for social and economic advancement. The systematic exclusion of women will result in a truncated local development effort, as will the vanishing population of youth, who in this past decade are migrating at alarming rates not just to urban centers but to other countries. Entire communities in many Latin American countries are denuded of youth. The preservation of younger generations is perhaps the single most effective measure of the success of a local development process.

What is most difficult about local development?
The difficulty is linked to the cliché "*think globally and act locally*." Many local development efforts target job creation and enhancement as their top priority. However, successful job creation strategies result from thinking outside of the box with an eye focused on markets and economic trends. Against my better judgment I once approved a grant to establish a computer training and educational video production center in an isolated community in the Dominican Republic with no electricity or telephone service. My sense was that the local subsistence farmers, whose association was appropriately called El Limón en Lucha, would much rather invest the grant funds in equipment to improve their agricultural production. I was wrong. Various factors not contemplated in the original proposal combined to make this project so successful that it became the subject of a 15-minute documentary broadcast by CNN in 2001. The youth of this community now have opportunities opened up by the advent of information technology and computer literacy.

MIGUEL SAYAGO

In El Limón, in the Dominican Republic, farmers wanted their children to learn about technology.

The lesson is that job creation needs to focus on skills needed for employment in the future. This concept is deeply rooted in the local development strategies of Spain's autonomous communities as they struggle to catch up to the rest of Europe.

Do larger units of government have any role?
In countries with federal systems, the state or provincial governments still tend to emulate the traditional paternalism and top-down approach of central governments. Still, localities need to become adept at tapping the resources and opportunities offered by regional as well as national governments. Paradoxically, autonomous agencies of central governments sometimes can become strong allies in a local development process. The key is to establish positive linkages and synergies with these agencies without surrendering local control. Social development funds can be powerful tools for local development. Alliances with national civil society organizations can also help to tap central government resources or connect with domestic and foreign markets. Local leaders must develop the strong diplomatic skills required to establish external public and private alliances while preserving their right to manage the local agenda.

Can local development actors derive any advantages from looking beyond their locality?
Localities are inserted into regions that share ecosystems and similar resource bases. Many problems cannot be addressed without the cooperation of neighboring localities, as, for example, when they share the same river valley or water source. Cooperating localities can also combine to produce economies of scale. Costly infrastructure, such as hospitals, centers of higher education and flood control systems, can be effectively shared by several localities. Large investments and economic development initiatives also hold the potential for collaboration among municipalities. Ecuadorian cantons often pool their heavy road-maintenance machinery to keep their roads open during the rainy season when landslides are common. Bolivian municipalities have established municipal alliances known as mancomunidades. Alliances among local governments are important to address regional concerns, and they are particularly effective when the individual members have strong local development processes underway.

How does local development tie in with building democracy at the grassroots?
Local development holds a promise that overshadows the particular interests of localities: the construction of democratic values and citizenship, which are at the heart of functioning democracies. The jury is probably still out on the success of democracy as currently practiced in many Latin American and Caribbean countries. The absence of democratic culture, the pressures of persistent poverty and growing income disparities, the resurgence of populism coupled with disillusionment with market reforms, are sobering factors in an analysis of the current state of democracy. What we should have known is that democracy is more than periodic national elections or competing political parties. Democracy must find its roots in the daily practice of citizens who make choices and play a central role in the decisions and actions that will affect their lives and those of future generations. In this respect, local development is the necessary foundation for the future of Latin American democracy.

David Valenzuela became president of the Inter-American Foundation in 2001, after serving IAF as acting president; vice president for programs; regional director for Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean; regional director for the Southern Cone and Brazil; senior representative for the Andean region; and representative for Peru and Bolivia.

The Road to **Pucarita**

By Percy Bazán Salas

A *minga* mobilized a commitment to a more ambitious project.

ALL PHOTOS: COURTESY PERCY BAZÁN SALAS

District residents at work on the road.

The Bambamarca and Condormarca districts in the department of La Libertad, province of Bolívar, Peru, are distant from Trujillo, the regional capital, and extremely poor. They are also isolated, linked only by a narrow bridle path to their principal market in Pucarita in the neighboring province of Sánchez Carrión. The poor condition of a 21-kilometer stretch of the path so impeded normal movement that agricultural products often arrived damaged after traveling over the rough terrain. Sometimes even pack mules would lose their footing and fall into the Chusgón River. Finally, residents of Bambamarca, Condormarca and Calemar, convinced that no one else was going to help them, decided to address the problem themselves.

In March 2003, Ermel Bustos Rodríguez and Cecilio de la Cruz Alvarado, respectively the mayor of Condormarca and the deputy mayor of Bambamarca, met with individuals representing the approximately 6,000 residents of their districts' 18 villages. Those present unanimously agreed to repair the 21-kilometer stretch from the port of Calemar to the Pucarita market by holding a *minga*, a traditional communal work project dating back to the Incas. The municipalities would organize and assign the volunteers. Residents of Calemar, where work would begin, agreed to transport them free of charge by raft and in rope baskets across the Río Marañon to the sites the day before the *minga* got underway.

On April 6 all district residents between the ages of 18 and 70 headed for Calemar, some walking up to nine hours from their homes to the port, so that they could start work at the site early the next day. The entire labor force of 1,200 men and women piled into the rafts and rope baskets and was transported in about six hours. The next two days, in keeping with the age-old custom, the workers assembled to the sound of flutes and drums, and after opening ceremonies, took their places along the path. Those from farthest away were assigned closest to the embarkation point. To the surprise of workers assigned to Chucuambo, 17 kilometers from the port, villagers from San Felipe (in the neighboring province of Sánchez Carrión) had learned of the *minga* and on their own initiative reported for work assignments repairing the four-kilometer stretch from Chucuambo to Pucarita. At night the groups formed soccer teams and competed by moonlight on the banks of the Chusgón.

Port residents provided rafts for transport.

Hoisting a mule to be transported by cable to the work site.

Work was completed by 3 p.m. on April 8 when everyone went home, but that wasn't the end of the project. The community members unanimously agreed to return in late August to improve the path into a drivable road. In preparation for this much more ambitious project, municipalities began coordinating with the institutions that would supply the necessary heavy machinery, fuel, lubricants, explosives and the field kitchens for the volunteers: the Association of Municipalities of the Andean La Libertad Region, the regional government of La Libertad, the provincial municipality of Bolívar, the Regional Direction of Transportation and Communications of La Libertad (which provided a Caterpillar tractor), and the Diocese of Huamachuco. The initial work has begun and the improved road is expected to open in 2004. Meanwhile, La Libertad's regional government has been considering a sizable allocation for the project, and the provincial municipality of Sánchez Carrión has committed funds.

However most of the credit for the improved road to Pucarita goes to the community residents who recognized the serious problem that was keeping them from competing in the Pucarita market, and decided to overcome it. Historically disadvantaged, even forgotten, and unaware of the existence of international assistance, they set a fine example of what can be accomplished through self-help, hard work and cooperation.

Percy Bazán Salas, a consultant to Asociación para el Desarrollo Local (ASODEL) and Asesoria Finanzas y Desarrollo Rural (AFIDER) and municipal manager of Condormarca, sent Grassroots Development *this illustration of traditional Andean self-help. The effort has received no IAF funding; however, according to Bazán, the European Union's subsequent support for an economic corridor in Bolívar includes productive initiatives in the districts cited.*

Focus: African Descendants

"Leadership and Socio-Economic Development for Communities of African Descent in Latin America and the Caribbean," was the title of the fourth annual conference of the Inter-Agency Consultation on Race, hosted by Organización de Desarrollo Étnico Comunitario (ODECO), a former IAF grantee, in La Ceiba, Honduras, February 1-4. Conference objectives were to provide training on implementing local development partnerships, drawing attention to the successes and challenges; open channels of communication among civil society, the private sector and government; and promote the participation of Afro-descendant youth.

Linda Kolko, IAF's vice-president, welcomed more than 150 participants representing 80 nongovernmental organizations from 18 Latin American and Caribbean countries. These included delegates from IAF Brazilian grantees Centro de Apoio ao Desenvolvimento, Minga, Criola, União de Negros pela Igualdade (UNEGRO) and Centro de Articulação de Populações Marginalizadas. Additionally, Maria Lucia Dutra Santos, of Grupo de Mulheres Negras Mãe Andresa and Osvaldo Cruz from Circulo Olympio Marques (COLYMAR), both in Brazil, led a session on economic development, and Romero Rodríguez from Mundo Afro in Uruguay facilitated a discussion on public policy and partnerships. Marcy Kelly of IAF's Programs Office and Mara Cerdeiro of DelNet addressed funding and training possibilities.

Representatives from the World Bank, Inter-American Development Bank, Pan-American Health Organization, British Department for International Development and the Ford Foundation explained their work with Afro-Latin communities. Closing the conference, Ricardo Maduro, president of Honduras, pledged to support a committee on Afro-Honduran affairs. Other distinguished speakers included U.S. Ambassador Larry Palmer; Edgar Torres of Colombia's House of Representatives; Elías Lizardo, Honduras' minister of health; and Luiz Barcelos, executive director of the Inter-Agency Consultation on Race. For more on the conference log onto www.iac-race.org. — *Judith A. Morrison, senior IAF representative and lead conference facilitator*

JOHN REED

A garifuna drummer with delegates in La Ceiba, Honduras.

Toward Racial Equality

Civil society organizations in Brazil have managed to dispel the myth of racial equality in which for decades at least some Brazilians had believed. Recent statistics from the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE) confirm the exclusion and injustices Afro-Brazilians have suffered across various socio-economic indicators.

For the past 10 years, IAF grantee CRIOLA has worked with Afro-Brazilian women in Rio de Janeiro toward combating racism and improving the standard of living of the black population. On June 27, 2003, CRIOLA organized a seminar that brought together 75 representatives from government, business and civil society to discuss the challenges Afro-Brazilians must overcome. Citing IBGE's statistics, speakers at the forum pointed out that blacks, for example, earn 57 percent less than white Brazilians. They also get a lower return on their investment in education; on average, a white Brazilian without a high school diploma earns more than a black Brazilian with a college degree.

Participants also talked about local development projects that focused on providing income-generating opportunities for Afro-Brazilian communities in the Northeast as well as in Rio. These include CRIOLA's

Projeto Arte e Meios (Art and Media Project), which helps craftswomen in Rio improve the quality of their products, increase sales and work as a group to better position themselves in the crafts market.

Representatives from the private sector highlighted the minimal involvement of Afro-Brazilians in the country's major businesses. Among the 93 largest Brazilian corporations, black men represent only 5.7 percent of employees, and black women, 1.8 percent. At the highest corporate level, only 1.2 percent of executives are black males, and there are no black female executives, according to Wellington Silva of Caixa de Previdência dos Funcionários do Banco do Brasil. In view of this striking imbalance, a cluster of 14 Brazilian technology companies have targeted an increase in Afro-Brazilians employed in their industry from 1 percent to 10 percent through a "fund against discrimination" which will be used to encourage Afro-Brazilian professionals. The fund will consist of voluntary contributions from employees willing to designate 1 percent of their salary for this purpose. The company will match the contribution two-to-one. Much of CRIOLA's event focused on raising awareness among business leaders regarding their social responsibility and the need for diversity in order to maintain a competitive edge. CRIOLA will seek corporate contributions to the micro-credit program started with funding from the Avina Foundation to address some of the issues discussed. For more information, contact Jurema Werneck or Lucia Xavier: criola@alternex.com.br. — *Juliana Menucci, IAF local liaison and advisory services, Brazil*

RedEAmérica Update

Since its founding in September 2002, the Inter-American Network of Corporate Foundations and Actions for Grassroots Development (RedEAmérica) has grown to 43 members from 12 countries. At its June 2003 meeting in Cancun, Mexico, hosted by Centro Mexicano para la Filantropía (CEMEFI) member representatives voted to limit membership over the next year to corporate foundations and companies actively supporting grassroots efforts. After that, however, RedEAmerica will welcome members

PATRICK BRESLIN

RedEAmérica founding member Fundación Corona has assisted beneficiaries ranging from schoolchildren to recyclers.

inexperienced in grassroots development but eager to learn.

On the Cancun agenda were a discussion of RedEAmérica's conceptual framework for grassroots development, the appointment of the CEO Hemispheric Committee, headed by Carlos F. Buhler of Holcim Brazil, to engage business leaders in poverty reduction and to identify new sources of funding, and the election of Fundación Polar of Venezuela to replace CEMEFI as the general secretariat. New members admitted in Cancun were Instituto de Cidadania Empresarial, Instituto Camargo Correa and Instituto Holcim from Brazil; Nuvó Cosméticos from Uruguay; Empresa Minera Yanacocha from Bolivia; and Fundación Avina-Peru. — *Karen Juckett, IAF staff assistant*

IAF's GDF in a Nutshell

Until the creation of the Grassroots Development Framework (GDF) in 1992, the Inter-American Foundation had worked 20 years without a systemic approach to project analysis. While the IAF studied many projects, methods of data compilation differed from representative to representative, and evaluations could only be based on case analyses. According to Emilia Rodriguez-Stein, IAF's director of evaluation, while there were "many studies in the past, there was never an integrated system."

Meaningful development implies both tangible and intangible transformations within society. Clearly an improvement in income or physical infrastructure, for example, can be measured, but how about a change in civic culture, social capital or democratic practice? Furthermore, any evaluative framework would need to be adaptable to the great diversity of projects, peoples, languages, regions and countries served by the IAF. How might lessons be systematized without loosing the local context? Through an extensive process of consultation and experimentation, and with the help of the grantees and regional support staff, the IAF designed the GDF as its means of capturing and assessing project results.

Represented graphically in the shape of a cone, the GDF organizes a series of indicators of tangible and intangible changes at individual, institutional and society levels. At the society level, for example, the tangible qualities of a changing policy environment are represented by indicators relating to laws, policies and practices, and intangible community norms are signaled in categories concerning values, attitudes and relations. Each category is broken down into specific components. Through this approach, the GDF became a tool not only useful to the IAF in evaluating its investment, but also to IAF grantees in outlining their goals and in managing their projects to maximum effect. In 1995, after three years of testing, the GDF became an IAF standard.

Full implementation and refinement required supplementary monitoring and analysis, which led to the development and training of in-country GDF experts. These data-verifiers meet with the grantees shortly after the approval of the funding agreement to explain the GDF, select indicators for measuring the accomplishment of objectives and to clarify data collection. They return every six months to check on progress and to confirm the data compiled by the project administrators. Verification entails meetings with the grantee and review of their documents as well as focus groups of beneficiaries. The results of these visits are reported to the IAF. At the end of the funding period, the data-verifier submits a project history and a final report summarizing the process, results and the lessons learned. Information reported is entered into a database which will eventually include all IAF-funded projects and offer the possibility of examining data from a wealth of experiences, allowing for in-depth statistical analysis and comparison. Results are further shared through an annual report to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and a monthly, in-house newsletter.

While tangible indicators have been successfully fine-tuned over the last two years, the Evaluations Office continues to refine the intangible half of the GDF. "The GDF is never a completed endeavor," said Rodriguez-Stein. "Every year there are new projects and so we need to constantly adapt the instrument." The IAF will put these improvements as well as its growing database and institutional and cluster analyses at the service of grassroots development. — *Joel Adriance, IAf intern*

IGNACIO DE LEÓN DÍAZ

Sandra Lafontaine, IAF's data verifier in the Dominican Republic, standing, explains the GDF to María Luisa Trejo, Lucila Lara Núñez, Miguelina Rodríguez and Isabel Sosa of the Centro de Servicios Legales para la Mujer (CENSEL), an IAF grantee addressing domestic violence.

ALL ASMARE PHOTOS: PATRICK BRESLIN

Recyclers en route to the state legislature.

Recyclers on the March

Hundreds of exuberant recyclers from Brazil and neighboring countries marched to the Minas Gerais legislature in Belo Horizonte on the first day of the Second Trash and Citizenship Festival. The event, held October 27-30, 2003, was hosted by IAF grantee Associação dos Catadores de Papel, Papelão e Material Reaproveitavel (ASMARE), whose recycling cooperative was featured in *Grassroots Development* 2002. Legislators not only welcomed the marchers but vacated their leather chairs to accommodate the overflow crowd.

What does citizenship have to do with trash? "The collector of recyclable materials performs an environmental service that even he doesn't recognize" said the late Eric Soares of Pernambuco when he took the

A ranking dignitary at the Festival's opening ceremonies was Marina Silva, Brazil's minister for the environment, right, pictured with, left to right, Nancy Martínez and Elizabeth Romero of Venezuelan grantee Papyrus; Marlene das Faias, IAF's liaison in Venezuela; and IAF representative Judith Morrison.

The legendary Dona Geralda was a scavenger by the time she was eight, raised 12 children and overcame alcoholism to found ASMARE and serve for years as its president and guiding light. Now general coordinator, she is known as a compassionate mentor and strict enforcer of the cooperative's rules. "ASMARE has standards," she explained. "To join, a trash collector has to keep his children in school. He can't steal, he can't use drugs, and he can't drink on the premises."

"This is a great movement and the Festival of Trash and Citizenship is important to strengthening and expanding it," Deputy André Quintão, left, told recyclers, including Eric Soares, next to Quintão on the steps of Minas Gerais legislature.

floor. "Economically, he generates raw materials for industry worth millions. But unlike handymen, masons and carpenters who are respected by society as professionals, the collector of recyclable material isn't." To Soares, who leads Brazil's National Movement of Trash Collectors, and the audience who cheered him, citizenship means respect, access to government services and statutory protections against exploitive practices such as unbalanced scales and payment in *cachaça*, Brazil's potent sugar cane liquor.

Trash is increasingly a lucrative source of income in the hemisphere as collectors organize for better bargaining power. ASMARE, founded by 10 homeless scavengers, pays its 250 members three times the minimum wage, health and education benefits, and a quarterly share of its annual profits. Even trash collectors who don't belong to ASMARE benefit from its clout in the market place. "Whenever there is a change in prices, ASMARE is at the table," said Cido Gonçalves, ASMARE's technical coordinator.

Nohra Padilla, executive director of the Asociación de Recicladores de Bogotá, was pictured in the photo exhibit. Her organization's lucrative city contract is considered a model throughout Latin America.

The array of local and national government officials who formally opened the Festival the evening of October 27 included Marina Silva, Brazil's minister for the environment. Hugely popular, she is a disciple of the late environmental justice and human rights activist Chico Mendes, and, like many in the audience, only learned to read as an adult. Silva acknowledged the value of the recylers' work and promised funds from her budget to further their efforts. José Grasiano, Brazil's minister for food security and the fight against hunger, reminded the audience that Brazilians discard 125,000 tons of refuse a day, and the recyclers have taught the country that half of that can be used again. The other 50 percent, he added, is an embarrassment to his ministry: food.

The Festival proved Grasiano's first point with exhibits of products and a show of fashions from recycled materials. Also on display were Miguel Sayago's photos of ASMARE and Patrick Breslin's photo essay on the Asociación de Recicladores de Bogotá, featured as well in *Grassroots Development* 2002 and a beneficiary of IAF partner Fundación Corona, which sent a delegation. Other IAF grantees who participated in the event included Fundação Centro de Defesa dos Direitos Humanos Bento Rubião, Centro de Articulação de Populações Marginalizadas (CEAP), Centro Integrado de Estudos e Programas de Desenvolvimento Sustentável (CIEDS) and Nova Pesquisa e Assessoria em Educação, all of Rio de Janeiro; Centro de Educação Popular (CEPO) from Rio Grande do Sul; and Papyrus from Venezuela.

Of concern to recyclers at the Festival was a policy under discussion to eradicate dumps, such as this one outside Rio de Janeiro, where an estimated 300,000 Brazilians forage for a living.

Remembering Betinho

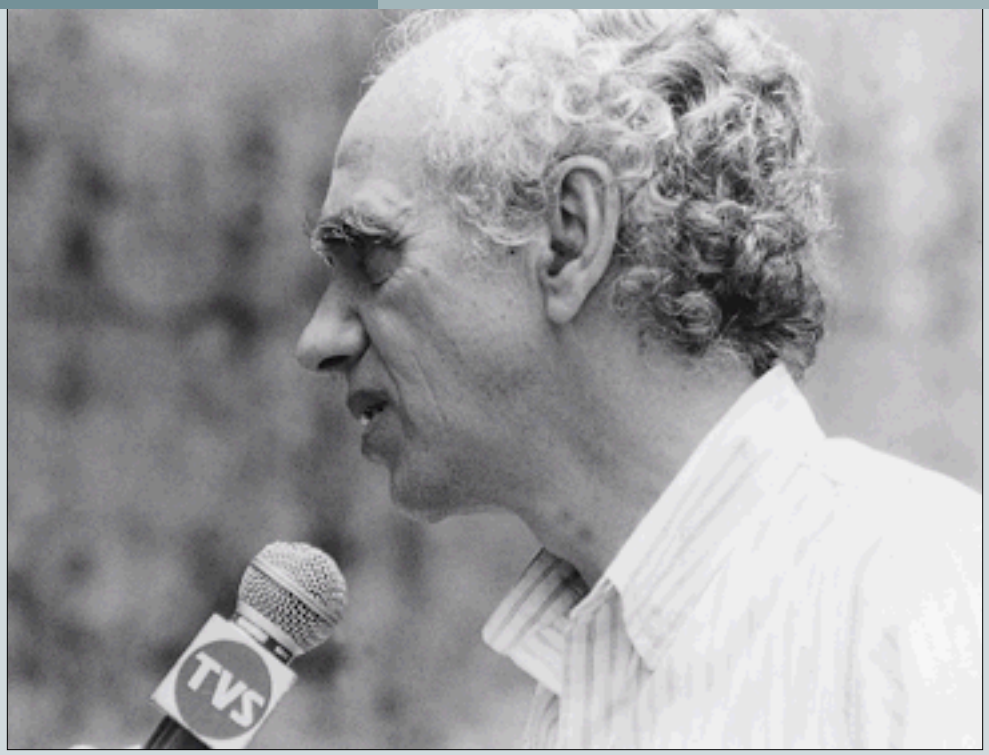
SEBASTIAN ALOOT

Maria Nakano in her IBASE office.

Maria Nakano was the guest of honor February 7 when IAF Brazilian grantee Fundação Bento Rubião officially inaugurated the Cooperativa Habitacional Mista Herbert de Souza, its newest affordable housing complex, named for Nakano's late husband, the legendary social activist known throughout Brazil as Betinho. All 20 new homes in the Jacarepaguá neighborhood of Rio de Janeiro had been built by residents organized into a *mutirão*, the Brazilian equivalent of the Andean *minga* described on page 43. Nakano congratulated the community on its hard work, shared words of encouragement and toasted the new home owners.

Since Betinho's death in 1997, Nakano has continued to work with Instituto Brasileiro de Análies Sociais e Econômicas (IBASE), the think tank focused on social issues that he founded in 1981. She was an advisor to IBASE's executive director until 2000 when she was sidelined by health problems. Now she's back on the job, organizing the voluminous documentation in IBASE's files into *a memoria de Betinho*.

Born in 1935, Herbert de Souza was a sociologist, a social critic and a passionate advocate for the destitute and disadvantaged. He married Nakano, a like-minded social worker, in 1970. Because of his activism, he was stripped of his Brazilian citizenship by the military dictatorship in power at the time. The couple spent much of the next decade in exile, principally in Chile, Canada and Mexico, and only returned home thanks to the passage of amnesty laws. Launched with just three people and a computer, IBASE, *The New York Times'* Mac Margolis wrote, "churned out survey after survey exposing the ills of a society pocked by corruption, landlessness, violence and injustice." As Betinho



Betinho

saw this work, said Nakano, when *Grassroots Development* caught up with her in her Rio office, "IBASE was concerned with theory, but the theory existed in function of an application to reality."

After Betinho, a hemophiliac, became fatally infected with HIV through a blood transfusion in 1985, he founded Associão Brasileira Interdisciplinaria da AIDS (ABIA) which successfully pressured for government regulation of blood banks. He also changed the public perception of people living with AIDS. "I think that the fact that he held himself out as infected with the virus," Nakano added, "automatically obligated anyone whom he encountered face to face to have a more open attitude." IAF's collaboration with Betinho, an investment reaching nearly $650,000, began with a 1988 grant to ABIA that extended through two supplements and, in 1991, segued into an annual award or extension to IBASE for five consecutive years. The last of these was earmarked for the Ação da Ciudadania Contra a Fome, Miséria e Pela Vida, a massive crusade against hunger and unemployment undertaken in 1993. It attracted more than 3 million volunteers, fed an estimated 16 million people and propelled Betinho, its driving force, into the international spotlight. Brazil is now revisiting this success and drawing important lessons for the recently inaugurated program called Fome Zero, or Zero Hunger.

Nakano acknowledges advances with respect to AIDS and that the current Brazilian administration's emphasis on addressing hunger is a possible consequence of Ação da Ciudadania. But she is quick to point out her assessment that another of Betinho's campaigns, on behalf of street children, came to nearly naught. "The greatest challenges in Brazil continue to be associated with confronting social inequality," she said, "and here in IBASE we are making an effort to have a more egalitarian society. Although Betinho is no longer alive, the team that did this work still remains. Without Betinho, it's more difficult to appeal to the public. It was a question of personal charisma. Anything he said had repercussions."

Brazilians have honored Betinho by putting his name on entities as diverse as a samba school, a civic award and, now, a housing project in Jacarepaguá. When Nakano appears at these dedications, she brings his legacy into sharp focus. Nonetheless she insists that her husband would not have wanted IBASE to dwell on the past. Once the archive is in order, she will designate an appropriate institution to become the custodian of *a memoria*. "That's my responsibility," she said. "Betinho was a man who lived in the present and was very engaged with the present. Because the future is shaped by the way people resolve the issues of the present."

For more on the IAF's work with Betinho, see "Harvesting the Bounty of Citizenship: The Fight against Hunger and Poverty in Brazil" by John W. Garrison and Leilah Landim in *Grassroots Development*, vol. 19, no. 2 (1995).

Transnational Collaboration: Piedras Blancas

In February, 20 representatives of associations of Salvadorans living in the U.S. gathered in Piedras Blancas (population 1,000), a village in the eastern department of La Unión some 70 miles from San Salvador. Their visit coincided with the annual week-long celebration honoring the community's patron saint, an occasion for family reunions of far-flung piedrablanqueños, some of whom arrive home in new *trokas* with four-wheel drive and air conditioning.

However, the association representatives were in town for another purpose: their first formal meeting with community and local government authorities to decide together which development projects to support during the coming year. CARECEN, a new IAF grantee, and, FUNDE, its partner in the project appropriately titled Salvadoran Men and Women Abroad as Links to Local Development, helped coordinate the event. With its IAF award, CARECEN will assist 20 villages similar to Piedras Blancas in building relationships with local government, prioritizing development projects through participatory planning processes and negotiating support with associations in the U.S.

Among the 50 people in attendance were representatives of associations from Boston, Houston, Los Angeles, Manassas (Virginia) and suburban Maryland, the mayor of Pasaquina, the principal of it's school, the advisor to La Unión's mayors' council and Piedras Blancas residents. The group set as priorities paving the

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Marcela Escobar and other Salvadoran expatriates from Piedras Blancas returned in February to discuss the community's development priorities.

village roads and construction of a community center that would house a library, a conference room and a space for cultural activities. The associations and the mayor each committed to contributing 25 percent of the budget for the project (estimated at $200,000); the remaining 50 percent would be solicited from the Salvadoran government's Social Investment Fund for Local Development.

Of the 400 Salvadorans from Piedras Blancas now living in the U.S., many are employed in the construction industry. Collectively, these former residents send about $35,000 each month to assist their families with basic living expenses in one of the poorest departments in El Salvador. Their support for paved roads and the community center represents contributions over and above their monthly remittances. Funds are raised through parties, contests, cook-outs, raffles and donations from businesses. In addition to their pledge to send cash, the associations have already donated significantly to these projects with nonmonetary remittances based on their members' experience and skills. José Antonio Gutiérrez, president of the Manassas association and a professional architect, and Misael Campos, owner of a construction company that rebuilt part of the Pentagon and recently won a contract to build a Social Security Association facility in Baltimore, arrived in Piedras Blancas with a set of building plans for the community center.

Piedras Blancas resident Amado Reyes' spacious home was the venue for the meeting and two satellite dishes in the patio confirmed the owner's observation that the development process was already under way. So did the comment of Mariano Herrera of nearby San Felipe, who has two sons in Maryland, one a car salesman and the other a construction worker. "Selling seven little cows 15 years ago to send the boys *al Norte* is the best investment I made in my life," he said. "Each one sends me $300 a month and I've used the money to buy more cattle that I feed better."— *Rolando Gutiérrez, IAF local liaison and advisory services, El Salvador*

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An IAF award to ADEMISS financed 25 floating fish cages; the beneficiary communities then used the income from tilapia sales to invest in 14 more.

Coping with Disasters

Agencia de Desarrollo Micro-Regional de los Municipios de Ilopango, Soyapango y San Martín (ADEMISS) received an IAF award in 2001 to assist five Salvadoran fishing communities on the north shore of Lake Illopango. With the goal of improving income and access to municipal services, the grantee has organized cooperatives to develop fish farms. Midway into the project, however, the NGO had to adapt to some unforseen challenges.

In October 2003, severe flooding prompted the Salvadoran government to declare the area a disaster zone. Heavy rains caused land slides that wiped out three tanks intended for fish propagation. Worse yet, an engineering survey confirmed not only that the tanks could no longer be used but that the changed topography posed a risk to rebuilding in the same place. Supported by an IAF grant amendment and

design assistance from the Salvadoran government's fisheries agency, the tanks are now under reconstruction on a new site on loan from a former community resident who had migrated to the U.S.

Even before the floods, the two earthquakes of 2001 had impacted the southern end of the lake by shifting dirt and blocking drainage of industrial pollutants, long an environmental concern. The Salvadoran government tried to re-open the drain after the earthquakes, but by last year fishermen feared that pollution was reaching the northern part of the lake. In response, ADEMISS helped form the Asociación del Organismo de Cuenca del Lago de Ilopango (ASOCLI), an environmental organization uniting six lakeside municipalities with four departments at the University of El Salvador and 20 community groups, including two other IAF grantees, Fundación Para El Fomento de Empresas para La Recolección y Tratamiento Ambiental de los Desechos Sólidos (ABA) and Centro de Protección para Desastres (CEPRODE). Geared to both advocacy and action, ASOCLI is lobbying the government to try again to fix the drainage system and is helping local residents effect change.

One of its first activities was a "lake clean-up day" that mobilized school children to clear the public recreation area, navy divers to scavenge for garbage off shore and residents of lakefront communities, including ADEMISS beneficiaries, to join with municipal workers in cleaning up the shores of their neighborhoods. IAF has earmarked additional funds for intensive testing of the lake for contamination by sewage and heavy metals. Over the next year, the marine biologist's reports on water conditions and on the health of the lake's fish and algae will be made available to ASOCLI, ADEMISS' five beneficiary communities, government and the press for use in efforts toward restoring an environment in which marine life can thrive. — *Kathryn Smith Pyle, IAF representative for El Salvador*

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Construyendo capacidades colectivas: Fortalecimiento organizativo de las federaciones campesinas-indigenas en la Sierra ecuatoriana

Editor: Thomas F. Carroll
Quito, Ecuador: 2002
Available in Spanish
Reviewed by William F. Waters

Among the lessons that have emerged from decades of experience in rural development in Latin America, two stand out. First, successful local organization is not simply a product of shared norms, values and beliefs, even when combined with dedicated leadership acting on behalf of the wider community. Rather, we have learned that to achieve their goals and objectives, local groups must develop the same skills as other kinds of organizations, and they are best evaluated on the basis of similar criteria. This is not to say that local realities and cultural specificities are not important and should not be considered in the analysis of progress at the local level. Nonetheless clear, objective criteria can be established and used to monitor and evaluate how well local organizations are functioning to meet the needs of their members. The second lesson is derived from the multi-layered universe of organizations representing constituencies at different geographic and jurisdictional levels. National- and community-level organizations are well known to development researchers and practitioners. Less well known are organizations which represent groups of communities and may belong to national organizations.

Tom Carroll calls these organizations intermediate, or, in Spanish, *organizaciones de segundo grado* (OSG), the term used in Ecuador. Carroll is one of the pioneers in addressing these two points mentioned above. Over a lifetime of dedicated service to rural development, he has produced a rich body of work composed of conceptual and methodological tools, particularly for the analysis of peasant and indigenous communities. Just over a decade ago, for example, *in Intermediary NGOs: The Supporting Link in Grassroots Development* (West Hartford, CT: Kumarian Press), perhaps his best known work in this genre, Carroll developed the methodology for using objective criteria for assessing the role of the intermediate organizations. [The IAF commissioned *Intermediary NGOs.—Ed.*]

Construyendo capacidades colectivas represents an ambitious contribution to the literature on development. As its title and subtitle suggest, the book examines local organizational capacity in the Ecuadorian highlands. At one level, its purpose is to understand and measure the organizational capacity of intermediate organizations, with respect to their interaction with their members and with external actors such as NGOs, the church, the government and international agencies. But more importantly, the book introduces and tests a methodological approach for measuring different facets of organizational capacity by using objective criteria in the form of previously-deter-

mined indicators. This approach is applied to four case studies from the Ecuadorian highlands, although reference is made to a larger study that also includes Bolivia and Peru.

The organization of the book is unusual; the best way to describe it is "interactive." Carroll is author of substantial portions of the book as well as editor; in the latter role, he comments on and invites comment on chapters written by others. He also presents useful bulleted key points after each of the five principle sections. The reader is urged to read these first; given the complexity of the book, this is good advice.

The first section, authored by Carroll, presents the "conceptual-methodological context." The conceptual framework is based on social capital theory, which comes to be used more or less interchangeably with the term "organizational capacity." The methodology consists of interviewing community leaders and residents and converting their responses to numerical values. Seven broad categories related to organizational capacity (leadership, participation, organizational culture, resource mobilization and use, sustainability, mediation and negotiation, and relationships and alliances) are broken down into 40 variables and 103 indicators. This section also explains how four intermediate organizations were selected, and it compares them on the basis of the variables and indicators.

The second section presents the four case studies, each by an Ecuadorian academic or practitioner who presents an analysis of data derived from the interviews, thereby quantifying different aspects of organizational capacity. That analysis is followed by a detailed essay on the historical and political development of each organization. Two of the four case studies also include commentaries by indigenous leaders.

The book's third section is unusual in that it consists of seven essays that critique the book's conceptual and methodological framework; several are in the form of question-and-answer dialogues with Carroll. In the fourth section, Carroll presents a reformulation of the methodology and his thoughts on its wider application. Here, he revisits a recurring theme that he refers to as ambiguities and tensions, by which he means the competing demands on the resources, capacities and loyalties of OSGs. Finally, four annexes contain an essay on social capital, a critique of the methodology (including a consideration of the usefulness of the categories, variables and indicators) and the instruments used to collect and tabulate the data reported in the case studies.

Important conclusions can be drawn regarding both of the two lessons alluded to earlier. First, Carroll amply demonstrates (and is supported by several of the critiques, most notably IAF representative Kevin Healy's) that local organization is not a "feel good" enterprise. Success at the intermediate level (which emerges as a sensible unit of analysis) involves coming to terms with crucial issues such as the role of supporting national and international organizations; competing interpretations of what sustainability means; potential conflict between the collective benefits of democratic rule on one hand and administrative norms and stability on the other; differences in political practice, concepts and priorities within the organizations; and prioritizing development projects as opposed to the development of social capital.

The second lesson is related to the methodology. At the risk of oversimplification, it could be said that there is a general mistrust of quantitative methods among Latin American development practioners and even in academia, partly because of the feeling that they fail to take into account unique aspects of individual cases. The four case studies reflect some ambiguity with respect to the methodology in that the descriptive, historical essays do not incorporate findings from the preceding quantitative analysis. Moreover, the four cases are compared on the basis of the categories and variables in the book's first section before they have been analyzed separately, so the reader has difficulty putting the findings in context.

Carroll clearly intends the methodology to be a flexible tool for monitoring and evaluating organizational capacity, and by including criticism of the approach as well as of the variables and indicators

that he uses, he signals that the methodology is not set in stone. Carroll adopts this position himself in the fourth section in an analysis of more than 200 Ecuadorian OSGs. One concludes that if followed carefully and adapted judiciously by people familiar with specific cases, this approach will show very clearly how organizations fare with respect to organizational capacity in general and, more importantly, with regard to specific factors such as managerial capability, relationships with members and financial accountability. For example, the authors of the case studies show that the organizations rate quite highly on some scales, but less well on others and one of the four rates much lower than the other three. This can be useful, even critical information for those who are directly concerned with those organizations. Similarly, in his concluding analysis, Carroll shows that of more than 200 OSGs, most rate in the middle and upper-middle ranges. The tools are thus able to discriminate between organizations and among distinct organizational capabilities. Whether the variables and indicators chosen for each category are the best is also a matter of question, but this likewise is shown to be open for discussion and modification.

In sum, the book requires work and dedication on the part of the reader. It is not to be consumed from cover to cover, but rather used more like a reference. At the most basic level, the book makes a convincing case for objective analysis of intermediate organizations as key protagonists in rural development. As readers evaluate the methodology and case studies in the light of their own experiences, many will conclude that the approach is not only valid, but useful. It will be a difficult lesson to learn, but ultimately a satisfying one.

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All photos in these sections on Construyendo capacidades colectivas *are of Unión de Organizaciones Campesinas de Cicalpa (UOCACI), an Ecuadorian federation of 24 indigenous villages and 37 community organizations, that received an IAF grant in 1988.*

Some Lessons for Organizational Capacity-Building

By Thomas Carroll from Construyendo capacidades colectivas *All Photos: Miguel Sayago*

This is an edited extract from my concluding chapter which examines the rise in organizational capacities of a number of indigenous campesino federations in the Andean Highlands. The external agents that helped to "induce," or build, this capacity (which is a structural form of social capital) were mostly local NGOs and church groups financed with European support. Changes in organizational capacity were not only observed during qualitative field studies but were also measured by a large number of indicators, scored to allow for quantification. — T.C.

Capacity-building strategies

The clearest lesson from our case studies is that the relatively high level of organizational capacity achieved by the campesino federations with the best scores has been the result of patient, long-term support by external agents. These agents were as interested in group empowerment as they were in the more conventional goal of delivery of services to the grassroots. In this process, the contribution of financial resources has gone hand-in-hand with the enhancement of individual and social learning.

Also noteworthy is the gradual transfer of responsibilities to the local actors, but with ongoing advisory assistance, which has tended to decrease in the later phases. These interactions between the external and internal agents have not been free of conflicts and ups and downs often produced by factors beyond the participants' control. Therefore, the external agents have had to assume risks and a flexible attitude that frequently resulted in changes in their strategy midstream. As a matter of fact, this nonlinear process entailed a kind of mutual learning; while, in their initial phases, the federations became familiar with new types of collective and modern behavior, the external professionals (with their largely mestizo staff) learned to become more socialized and adapt to a transcultural environment. Consequently, the success of these cases is largely attributable to the development of mutual confidence, without the expressions of dominance and inferiority that generally characterize contacts between the peasant-indigenous world and the world of urban white/mestizo professionals. Nor should we underestimate the importance of strengthening the self-confidence and dignity of leaders and indigenous para-professionals.

This *ex-post* view cannot be attributed to a deliberate design or to systematic *ex-ante* planning by the agencies. The dynamics developed during the process. But it is clear that certain agencies which provided funding, especially from European sources, were highly committed to supporting these efforts long-term. This financial and strategic commitment to building organizational capacity is very clearly illustrated in the case of UNOPAC (Federación de Organizaciones Populares de Ayora Cayambe), one of the highland Ecuadorean federations that obtained the highest scores in our samples. The advisory team, consisting of young professionals hand-picked by local NGOs, worked continuously within the organization for 10 years, although the team size was gradually reduced, and for the first five years the outside contribution, mainly from Norwegian bilateral aid, exceeded $100,000 a year.

The role of the external actors in the capacity-building process has been varied. Three key dimensions stand out in the cases that were studied. First, the external agents contributed resources (or opened up access to other sources) for capitalization of the federations, for investments in the training of human

capital, and for administrative systems and infrastructure. Second, they facilitated the development of external ties and built bridges between the federations and other actors. Third, they promoted the organization's internal strength — which required much skill and sensitivity on the part of the agents and intimate knowledge of the unique internal characteristics of each of the federation and its local context. It is clear that few donors can function this way, and many had to rely on local counterparts to build these types of relationships. In several of the cases we studied, the promotion of internal capacity entailed intervention in conflict resolution at critical junctures.

It is interesting to note that, while some federations had their origins in the support offered by state actions, the role of government entities in capacity-building has not been successful, due, among other reasons, to the lack of autonomy conferred to the fledgling campesino federations and, especially, to the lack of continuity of state support for protracted periods and during changing regimes.

Another lesson from the cases is that, without the presence of the external actors, the federations would have had difficulty in developing a culture of responsibility and accountability. It seems that this dimension of institutional capacity, along with the necessary transparency of behavior, does not emerge spontaneously from the federations, whose very nature, being above the base groups, impedes daily interactions through which responsibility is typically developed at the community level. In the initial phase of the federations, when base-federation relationships are still weak, it is difficult to establish social control from the bottom up. Therefore, the external agents must, in some measure, become surrogates for this social control while building capacities. Only after relationships with the bases have been strengthened is it possible to hope that social control will come from the membership.

Also very interesting is the experience of some Bolivian NGOs in building networks among micro-regional actors. These NGOs saw their role as that of architects of capacity-building on multiple levels within a region. This entailed working simultaneously with communities, federations and, a very rare occurrence, with other NGOs, with other funding sources and even with the local governments and provincial development councils. In this way they established links among civil sector organizations and between

civil sector organizations and local government. Something similar has occurred in the canton of Guamote, Ecuador, where for the first time the indigenous federations, originally aided by Catholic activists, gained control of the *municipio*.

Key low-cost investments

We would like to point out some lines of very low-cost investments/actions that have the potential to increase cohesion and integration within the federations. Because of the heterogeneity of the base communities with respect to the availability of resources, and given the differing economic viability of member-households, we have found that the economic/productive projects tend to have exclusionary consequences. Under these conditions, productive investments invariably benefit campesinos with more resources and education. A good strategy is to try to balance these effects with inclusive activities that result in more broadly distributed benefits:

- investments in all kinds of information/communications (radio transmitters, bulletins, computer access, telephones, dissemination of economically useful information, for example, on prices, markets and sources of employment);
- legal assistance, especially with regard to land tenure and water rights, and help with resolution of members' ever-present problems with the bureaucracy;
- multi-use facilities (at federation headquarters and in the communities themselves, with good sanitary facilities, kitchens and childcare) which can play a key role in socialization and exchange as a venue for a range of services, community stores, health outreach, committee gatherings and cultural events;
- promotion of and investment in all kinds of cultural/symbolic capital — fiestas, sporting events, fairs — which, the case studies show, can ease tensions and strengthen intercommunity ties, including bonding between urban and rural groups;
- help and encouragement in forging horizontal links between federations through the exchange of experiences, travel grants, common workshops and, ultimately, alliances for formulating common policies.

"Projectized" assistance: The controversial role of the projects

The fact that almost all financial aid and technical assistance comes in the form of "projects" has generated a great deal of criticism. Most of the objections derive from the artificiality a project imposes — with its own requirements in terms of time frames, planning cycles and predetermined flows of resources superimposed on the daily rhythms of organizational life. The concept was born in connection with the financing of infrastructure investments, an activity which can be planned between a starting date and a concluding date, but it now applies to all kinds of activities. Another set of negative arguments is based on the more recent donor requirements of popular participation as well as financial and environmental sustainability, which involve not just establishing longer than usual periods for the projects but also much more investment and effort prior to and subsequent to the formal project periods.

Balancing these criticisms are arguments in favor of the project format. First, the project framework imposes discipline and helps with planning and financial control. Second, our experience has shown that the project system as applied by the major donors allows for a certain flexibility and adaptation to the nature and rhythm of the funded activities. Moreover the "projectized" mode of assistance was not an impediment to the Inter-American Foundation and other donors who simply extend the funding period of individual grantees through successions of projects for the same grantees and with similar purposes. As a matter of fact, this formula of sequential projects has enabled certain donors to take advantage of prior experiences in order to make adjustments without losing continuity. These include European agencies such as COTESU (Switzerland), APN (Norway) and DED (German Social-Technical Cooperation Service), as well as the IAF. Obviously, this kind of flexibility is less feasible for the multilateral agencies, whose procedures, especially with respect to approvals and procurement, are much more rigid and complicated. But phased projects do not necessarily reflect a greater

interest in institutional strengthening.

We have seen that, as a capacity-building policy, it is extremely important to assure that "projects" feed into and support ongoing *activities*. In other words, specific investment projects should support the main long-term purposes of the organization. There is an unfortunate tendency among donors to favor "new" approaches even in situations when it would be better to support and expand ongoing activities. We have found that donors and domestic NGOs engage in long-term collaborations along special lines (irrigation, credit, forestry) which have permitted the federations to institutionalize these activities and seek funding to expand them, rather than being held prisoners of the ever-changing menu of fashions in external aid.

In conclusion, it seems to us that "projectized" assistance in and of itself is not an obstacle to organizational strengthening, provided that it is managed with flexibility and attention to continuity. After the individualistic, small-entrepreneur-based approach to rural assistance, there is now a return by donors to "community-based" development. The tendency of various donors to disperse their mini-projects without concerning themselves with the institutional fabric within the region can have negative effects on *campesino* empowerment. One very clear lesson stands out: It is imperative not only that there be coordination among donors but also that the external actors understand the complexity of the institutional landscape and assure themselves that their contributions will strengthen, rather than weaken, associational and inter-organizational capacities. Institutional assessments, which are crucial for proper project design, are almost never performed among the pre-project baseline studies required by funding agencies

Financial autonomy

Achieving at least partial self-financing of projects has been a concern of donors and analysts for quite a while. However, there is still little comprehension of the need to gradually provide the federations with a stronger financial base so that their recurrent expenses are largely covered by their own resources. Except in the case of the *juntas de agua* (irrigation associations), there are almost no cash contributions or payments from the members, and cases in which the organization capitalizes some of the enterprises' income are few and far between. This has repercussions in other spheres. It is very difficult, for example, to offer paid positions to trained young people in order for the federations to acquire their own professionals.

It is true that in the majority of the cases we have seen substantial contributions, in terms of communal work (*mingas*), to projects of common interest and that in the better-consolidated federations a great deal of volunteer work by the members is also mobilized. But money is something else again; it is difficult to raise in the absence of a direct relationship between personal benefit and contributions or dues.

Currently, several federations are covering part of their annual expenses (mostly salaries) thanks to the small earnings from a series of productive mini-projects such as stores, mills and the sale of agricultural supplies. UNOPAC has an agreement under which each micro-enterprise — including those not operated by the federation — contributes a percentage to the organization's core maintenance costs.

The worst way to subsidize the federations is to assume the costs of the recurrent operating expenses. In the majority of cases, there are good reasons for some subsidies, such as the need for technical assistance, training and initial capitalization. But there is always great pressure from the organization's leaders to finance expenses, and many agencies fail to resist it. Even the IAF, in its program in Bolivia, has paid salaries and operating expenses for the enterprise-type federations over many consecutive years, without negotiating a gradual phase-out of this support.

The problem of self-financing is closely related to another, which we can call "the gift culture." As the federations gather strength, financing through loans should have a more important role than through grants. Individual and collective loans help create an organizational culture of reciprocal obligations capable of modifying the classic expectations of the

campesinos that they have a kind of "acquired right" to receive free services from the government or other agencies. Sustainability depends, in large part, on changing this mentality.

Human resources development

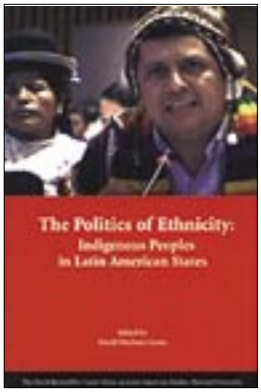
Our research shows that the upgrading of human resources is the backbone of any organization-building effort and should be the external agents' primary challenge. Despite its long history, training is perhaps the most practiced tool, but the least understood, in the repertoire of outside assistance. The training requirements of the various organizational levels — leaders, advocates or paraprofessionals, and members — need to be addressed together. We have found that what is called training in "socio-organizational" matters generally lacks solid professional foundations and is not sufficiently focused on the solution of everyday organizational problems.

The most important methodological lesson for human resource development is the shift from the classroom to the field. The most effective training was in-service "learning-by-doing." The prolonged presence of advisers and promoters made possible a process in which the trainees designated by the organization worked as colleagues and counterparts of the expert. Formal classes and seminars at designated teaching centers alternated with supervised practical exercises. Among the criteria for selecting the trainees was a commitment, when they returned, to use their knowledge to help their communities or the federation, and not simply for their own benefit.

We first thought that the federations could gradually acquire their own highly trained technical staff in agronomy, forestry, law or hydraulic engineering. But we have come to the conclusion that, except in very specific cases of collective enterprises devoted to sophisticated export production, such as El Ceibo (a Bolivian cacao cooperative and IAF grantee), the federations do not have the capacity to self-finance specialists at such a high professional level. Also, the limited coverage of the majority of the federations does not justify the full-time use of such technicians who, at any rate, prefer to live in and work out of urban areas. Rather, the recommended strategy is to train a good number of local para-professionals and contract higher-level specialists only as needed, individually or through NGOs. We have found interesting cases where younger indigenous agronomists formed their own professional organization, after returning to their provincial centers from their university training. It was mutually more efficient for the local campesino organizations to contract these locally-based professionals as needed, rather than to hire them individually on a full-time basis.

We have found that even in relatively large organizations, effectiveness is related to the existence of relatively small groups that have learned to cooperate and resolve conflicts. This is consistent with worldwide experience in organizational sociology, according to which bonds and mutually supportive relationships that have been built up among teams or relatively small subsets of members are crucial for the success of the organization as a whole. The lesson is that the size of the "core group" in the federations should be increased over time, by training more individuals with cross-cutting ties, who are willing to assume formal and informal leadership positions. This reinforces the need to "socialize" training programs to stress the value of group advancement over individual benefit.

Thomas F. Carroll, an agricultural economist, was a resident scholar at the IAF in 1989-1990. In addition to teaching at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University and the George Washington University, he was on the staff of the Inter-American Development Bank and the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations. His Intermediate NGOs *is based on two decades of IAF experiences.*



The Politics of Ethnicity: Indigenous Peoples in Latin American States

Editor: David Maybury-Lewis

Harvard University Press: Cambridge, 2002

Available in English

The Politics of Ethnicity, edited by David Maybury-Lewis, offers 11 anthropologists' views of Indian movements in Mexico, Guatemala, Panama, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, Paraguay and Brazil, and of relations between indigenous peoples and the respective national government.

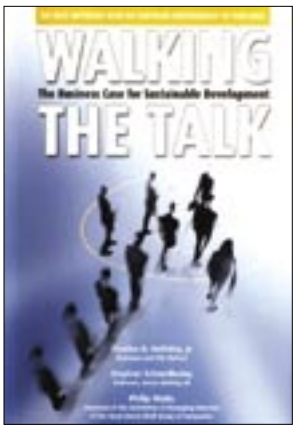
Indigenous demands for territorial recognition and demarcation have met with varying results in Latin America. Most successful were the Kuna of Panama who early on secured the 5,000 square kilometers known today as the Comarca de Kuna Yala. In Colombia, indigenous groups officially own 25 percent of all land, but a large portion of it is located in forest and mountain areas under insurgent control. Indigenous Brazilians, who comprise less than 1 percent of the country's population, have faced much greater resistance to recognition of their land and cultural rights. This book offers insight into the social processes involved in pressing these claims and into why some governments have been more receptive than others.

The 1970s witnessed a political opening across Latin America that gave indigenous groups an unprecedented opportunity to pursue their demands within government institutions. In order to influence policies, however, Indians often needed to fit the government's definition of their ethnicity. Several chapters in *The Politics of Ethnicity* explore the implications of an identity imposed from outside. In an extreme case, the Guatemalan government's definition allowed it to attribute the military's brutal actions against Indians to innocent indigenous people. By co-opting a few Indians, it perpetuated doubt and fear within indigenous communities for many years. In Colombia, special land rights for indigenous peoples sparked a selective transformation of cultures, engendering an exaggeration of characteristics identified by the state as "traditional." In some cases, nonindigenous peasant groups created indigenous histories for themselves in order to take advantage of the special benefits afforded Indians. During the 1980s, increased interaction with international environmental and human rights organizations encouraged further adoption of an imposed identity. Today, indigenous identity remains a hotly debated issue. Several authors in this book address the danger of hindering the natural process of cultural renewal by forcing a group to freeze-dry its culture.

A demand for autonomy is another common thread in the experiences recounted in these chapters. In addition to cultural recognition and acceptance, indigenous groups across Latin America insist on managing their own affairs according to local custom. On a broader level, this implies integration of their local governance structures into the national political apparatus. In several countries, governments have responded by granting limited autonomy to recognized indigenous groups.

Finally, *The Politics of Ethnicity* skillfully explores the universal indigenous demand for a multi-ethnic state. While several Latin American governments have updated their constitutions to acknowledge the population's pluricultural makeup, others, for example in Mexico and Brazil, remain defiant for fear of granting indigenous groups too much autonomy. Even in states officially recognized as multi-ethnic, erratic enforcement often prevents the exercise of constitutionally guaranteed rights.

Maybury-Lewis has gathered an impressive array of expertise and analysis. Each author speaks with a distinct voice, yet the volume flows as a single inspirational story. *The Politics of Ethnicity* presents with remarkable clarity and sensitivity the complex issues facing indigenous peoples of Latin America in their daily struggles to find their voice and make it heard in their nations. — *Megan Savage, IAF intern*



Walking the Talk: The Business Case for Sustainable Development

By Charles O. Holliday, Jr., Stephan Schmidheiny and Philip Watts

Greenleaf Publishing Limited: San Francisco, 2002

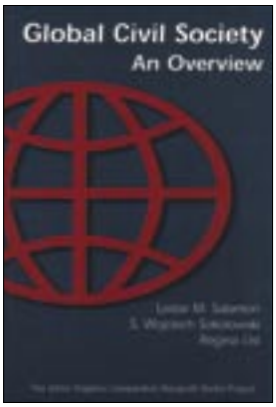
Available in English

Walking the Talk: The Business Case for Sustainable Development aims to present the case for business involvement in sustainable development practices. The authors, all leaders of multinational companies, are current or former chairmen of the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD), which emerged from the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro.

For any business seeking involvement in sustainable development activities, this book is a rich resource. Topics covered include legal frameworks, eco-efficiency, corporate social responsibility, the market for environmentally and socially friendly products, the value of innovation and partnerships across sectors, and poverty reduction. Case studies and commentary are drawn from businesses already working in the developed and developing world.

The authors provide especially good information and fresh recommendations on environmental subjects. They advocate legal incentives to encourage environmentally responsible business practices, an end to perverse subsidies that cause the depletion of scarce natural resources, and factoring environmental costs into prices. Finally, they show how companies can reduce their adverse environmental impact by moving from a focus on making and selling more products toward a focus on services and knowledge flows, and by creating closed production loops that result in no waste.

If environmental issues are the strength of the book, however, social issues are its relative weakness. While the authors acknowledge that the concept of sustainable development includes a strong social justice component, and they emphasize the importance of alleviating poverty, the work does not effectively address how business can contribute to poverty reduction or argue for the advantages of doing so. They do urge businesses to provide high-quality, low-cost products to low-income people, and point to microcredit as a way of bringing the poor into the market. But while access to cheaper and better consumer goods might improve living conditions, it can't break the cycle of poverty and does not address the root cause. Affordable products and greater buying power might be eventual results of development, but they don't lead to it. Selected case studies in this book do illustrate how companies partner with community and other organizations to address the problems that poor people face. The authors, however, never make the connection of this approach to healthier societies and more profitable businesses. — *Karen Juckett, IAF staff assistant*



Global Civil Society: An Overview

By Lester M. Salamon, S. Wojciech and Regina List

Johns Hopkins Comparative Nonprofit Sector Project: Baltimore, 2003

Available in English

In 2002, *Grassroots Development* published Lester Salamon's "The Third Sector in Global Perspectives" in which Salamon spoke of the "global associational revolution," meaning the proliferation of nongovernmental organizations and other nonprofits, and the challenges they face. *Global Civil Society: An Overview*, a 2003 publication of the Johns Hopkins Comparative Nonprofit Sector Project, expands upon those ideas and provides some of the empirical underpinnings for Salamon and his co-authors' conclusions.

COURTESY JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY

Lester M. Salamon

The Johns Hopkins Nonprofit Sector Project has been working since 1991 to collect data on the organizations defined as lying between the market and the state. It also aims to explain national and regional variations in the third sector, assess its impact and effectiveness and disseminate the results of the research. Its study encompasses groups providing services in education, health and development, as well as religious, cultural civic advocacy organizations, in 35 countries, with developed, developing and transitional economies, in Latin America, Asia, Africa and Europe.

Newcomers to Salamon's works, which are required reading in universities around the world, are always impressed with his descriptions of the civil society sector as an economic force. According to Salamon, whose academic credentials include a degree in economics, the third sectors of the countries in this study combine to form the world's seventh largest economy, spending $1.3 trillion and employing 39.5 million full-time workers and volunteers. Despite the size of the third sector, it still faces significant challenges such as a lack of visibility within a political model focused on businesses and governments. Through research and documentation, the Johns Hopkins Nonprofit Sector Project hopes to increase the awareness of civil society, which may give the third sector greater legitimacy and increased ability to participate in policy discussions.

In his preface to what is a slender but substantive report, Salamon promises to incorporate *Global Civil Society: An Overview* into a much larger publication. As it is, this brief overview already provides a solid introduction to the nonprofit sector and its characteristics. *Global Civil Society: An Overview* and other publications of the Johns Hopkins Nonprofit Sector Project are available through the Johns Hopkins University's Center for Civil Society Studies Web site at www.jhu.edu/~ccss. — *Alexis Smith, IAF program staff assistant*

Un Futuro en positivo
La cooperación internacional en el siglo XXI

By Michael Edwards

Intermóm Oxfam: Barcelona, 2002
Earthscan Publications Ltd.: London, 1999

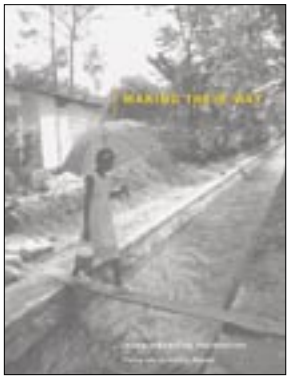
Available in Spanish and English

During a guest lecture at American University in Washington, D.C. last spring, Michael Edwards spoke passionately about his book *Future Positive: International Co-operation in the 21st Century*. Within three years of its publication in 1999, *Future Positive*, with its review of an often tumultuous half-century of international cooperation and suggestions for improvement, was already required reading for most of us in the AU audience. In 2002, *Un Futuro en positivo* appeared in a serviceable Spanish translation, bringing Edwards' ideas to a far greater readership.

The first half of *Future Positive* analyses the 50-year evolution of international cooperation through the Marshall Plan, the Cold War, Structural Adjustment, the East Asian miracle and Africa's staggering challenges. Edwards finds the outcome "disappointing" for four principal reasons: The system failed to harness global capitalism as a force for equitable economic growth; it failed to establish the framework of equality, mutual respect, and political legitimacy Edwards deems required for successful cooperation; it failed to stop infringements upon basic rights and freedoms; and it failed to connect meaningfully with truly effective forces of change such as civil society and the private sector.

Edwards puts a dazzling grasp of history on display and pulls out observations on how the international system could do a better job. While he avoids predictions, he is not shy about making recommendations. In order to advance, he insists, donor agencies will need to give aid recipients room to maneuver. He also argues for the need to "humanize" capitalism, which "means tackling the interlocking structures of social, economic and political power that exclude particular groups of people." In the context of market structures that allow middlemen to exploit legions of farmers and consumers, he offers a fresh and unexpected example of humanized capitalism: an IAF-supported project targeting "small producers in MERCOSUR, which increases their bargaining power in negotiations over prices and conditions of sale." This apparently refers to La Coordinadora de las Organizaciones Representativas de los Productores Familiares en el Ambito del MERCOSUR, which resulted from meetings organized by several IAF grantees of the early 1990s in Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay. Through its MERCOSUR Regional Learning Initiative, the IAF had assisted the small-farmer organizations with information exchanges and analyses of the regional integration process. Edwards, in fact, cites the IAF in several footnotes and his suggestions for more successful foreign assistance ring familiar, as for example, when he says, "Development work is never insignificant just because it is small in scale. If it is quality work that makes the right connections, its impact will diffuse through systems and structures in many unpredictable ways. And if it fails to make those connections it will have little impact, however large it is."

Future Positive is replete with inferences that communities "know how," as the IAF's *They Know How* famously documents, that development cannot be imposed from above or from outside, that assistance must take the form of alliances between donors and beneficiaries. Along with accountability (via audits, monitoring and evaluations) Edwards stresses dialogic politics and decentralized, democratic governance, and he uses projects in Guamote, Ecuador, and Cajamarca, Peru — where IAF has worked extensively — as examples of their beneficial effects. This should all be heartening to those who have "walked the talk" and think international cooperation might eventually lead, as Edwards puts it, "never to a future perfect but to a future positive." — *Ana Tenorio, IAF intern*



Making Their Way

Photo Exhibit: *Miguel Sayago*

Available on loan from the Inter-American Foundation

To document its program of self-help in Latin America and the Caribbean, the Inter-American Foundation has commissioned various professional photographers over the past three decades. *Making Their Way*, the IAF's first traveling photo exhibit, consists of 30 mounted prints excerpted from the portfolio of Miguel Sayago, one of the artists who have depicted the beneficiaries of IAF's assistance in their homes, neighborhoods and workplaces — where we meet them. Sayago has been shooting for the IAF almost since beginning his career as a professional photographer in 1984. In *Making Their Way*, he captures not only IAF's work but also the diversity of our hemisphere: fishing enclaves and mountain villages, urban slums and rural communities, micro-businesses and small farms, changing landscapes and timeless folkways, and the indigenous peoples and African descendents comprising a disproportionately large percentage of the poor. Often behind the person or scene caught on film, there is a story.

The collection is available to interested institutions on loan. It has already been displayed in conjunction with the Organization of American States' ministerial meeting of the Inter-American Commission on Social Development in Santiago, Chile, and in the Patio Azteca at OAS headquarters in Washington, D.C. As this issue of *Grassroots Development* goes into print, the exhibit is scheduled to be shown at the International Congress of the Latin American Studies Association, October 7-9, in Las Vegas, Nevada.

Communauté Croix-Fer, Riaribe, Haiti. Raymonde Louis, 11, attends a school built and equipped in 2001 through a partnership initiated by her community and supported by IAF grantee Fondayson-Enstitsyon-yo pou Developman ki Sòti na Baz-la (FIDEB), a federation of community organizations and grassroots groups representing every Haitian department. FIDEB makes grants to projects mobilizing twice the FIDEB award in counterpart from other sources.

To view selected photographs from *Making Their Way*, log onto www.iaf.gov, choose a language and click on photo essay. To arrange for this exhibit to travel to your institution, contact Mark Caicedo at mcaicedo@iaf.gov. Upon request, the IAF can also provide speakers to accompany the exhibit and explain grassroots development.

Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. The Projeto Desportivo e Cultural Joãozinho, a beneficiary of IAF grantee Centro de Educação e Articulação Popular (CEAP), features soccer training as part of its leadership program for children from low-income families. Some young men enrolled learn the game well enough to be recruited by Brazil's professional teams.

IAF Publications Still Available

Spanish

Partnerships among civil society, business and government are a valuable tool in development and this book offers practical guidelines to practitioners interested using them toward improving the quality of life for the poor and the disadvantaged. *Formación de Alianzas Para el Desarrollo Sostenible* takes the reader through the partnership process, from the early planning stages to the construction of an alliance, and ends with a technique for measuring the impact of activities jointly undertaken. Examples of actual working partnerships from throughout Latin America and the Caribbean are included.

English

The recent explosion in migration to the United States dramatically increased remittances to Latin America and the Caribbean at the same time official assistance was declining — a coincidence that has made remittances of critical interest to the development community. In March 2001, the IAF, the United Nations Economic Commission on Latin America and the World Bank co-sponsored the first multilateral conference on the topic. The resulting publication, *Approaches to Increasing the Productive Value of Remittances: Case Studies in Financial Innovations and International Cooperative Community Ventures,* coordinated by former IAF representative Carlo Dade, is the most thorough exploration to date of the potential for channeling remittances into development projects.

Portuguese

According to recent census information, people of African descent make up one-third of Latin America's population, yet comprise 50 percent of its poor. Only in the last few years has the existence of their communities been documented and the available research tells us little about the residents' economic engagement. At the 2001 International Congress of the Latin American Studies Association, an IAF-sponsored panel focused on issues surrounding the self-help efforts of this minority often described as invisible. In *Economic Development in Latin American Communities of African Descent*, IAF representative Judith Morrison has compiled the panel's presentations, including her own detailing IAF's support for three Afro-Brazilian initiatives.

English

Togetherness by Beryl Levinger and Jean McLeod examines the experiences of 12 intersectoral partnerships — among NGOs, local government and, in some cases, private sector businesses — working on grassroots development in five Latin American countries. The authors analyze the vocabulary, stages and types of partnerships entered into, as well as the benefits and burdens of such collaborations. Lessons learned from their on-site research do not always conform to the conventional wisdom but find ample support in the data provided by projects on the ground, all of which are profiled in this book.

Limited supplies remain in the language indicated. To order, e-mail publications@iaf.gov or write to Office of Evaluation and Dissemination, Inter-American Foundation, 901 North Stuart Street, 10th Floor, Arlington, Virginia 22203.

First-time homeowner Maria Marta Machado waves the keys to her new house completed in June 2003 through the IAF-supported self-help program of the Fundação Bento Rubaião in a low-income community outside Rio de Janerio. The Fundação keeps the homes affordable by requiring that the candidates for ownership commit to four weekends of training as well as to a sweat equity investment in the new complex, which results in a dwelling that costs half the going market price. A revolving loan program caps mortgage payments at 30 percent of the minimum wage. Because of her health, Machado, retired after 27 years of employment in an orphanage, donated her labor to the community kitchen while her neighbors spent weekends and holidays on construction. The house, shared by the owner and her son, has electricity, running water, a gas stove in the kitchen, a television in the living room and lace coverlets on the beds. A meticulous housekeeper, Machado showed off her home's immaculate interior when *Grassroots Development* visited.

PATRICK BRESLIN

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